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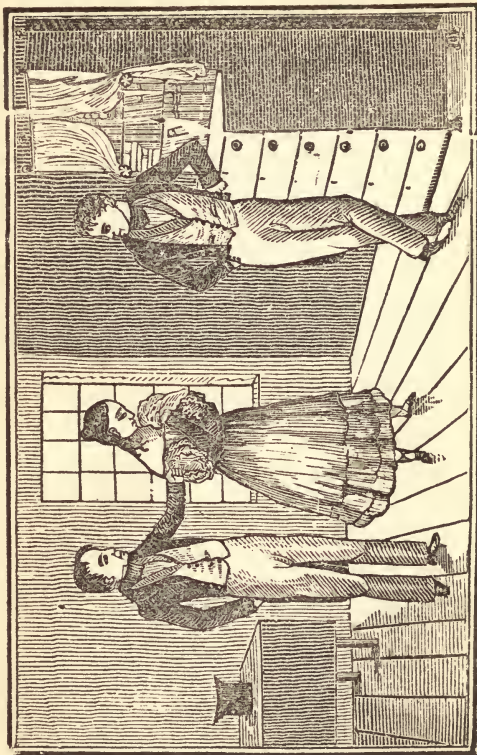












Interview between Alonzo and Melissa's Father

# ALONZO AND MELISSA,

OR THE

## UNFEELING FATHER.

A Tale, Founded on Fact.

[ Daniel Jackson ]



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# ALONZO AND MELISSA.

MAIN

A TALE

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IN the time of the late revolution, two young gentlemen of Connecticut, who had formed an indissoluble friendship, graduated at Yale College, in New-Haven: their names were Edgar and Alonzo. Edgar was the son of a respectable farmer. Alonzo's father was an eminent merchant. Edgar was designed for the desk, Alonzo for the bar; but as they were allowed some vacant time after their graduation before they entered upon their professional studies, they improved the interim in mutual friendly visits, mingling with select parties in the amusements of the day, and in travelling through some parts of the United States.

Edgar had a sister, who for some time had resided with her cousin at New-London. She was now about to return, and it was designed that Edgar should go and attend her home. Previous to the day on which he was to set out, he was unfortunately thrown from his horse, which so much injured him as to prevent his prosecuting his intended journey: he therefore invited Alonzo to supply his

place, which invitation he readily accepted, and on the day appointed, set out for New-London, where he arrived, delivered his introductory letters to Edgar's cousin, and was received with the most friendly politeness.

Melissa, the sister of Edgar, was about sixteen years of age. She was not what is esteemed a striking beauty, but her appearance was pleasingly interesting. Her figure was elegant; her aspect was tempered with a pensive mildness, which in her cheerful moments would light up into sprightliness and vivacity. Though on first impression her countenance was marked by a sweet and thoughtful serenity, yet she eminently possessed the power to

Call round her laughing eyes, in playful turns,  
The glance that lightens and the smile that burns.

Her mind was adorned with those delicate graces which are the first ornaments of female excellence. Her manners were graceful without affectation, and her taste had been properly directed by a suitable education.

Alonzo was about twenty-one years old; he had been esteemed an excellent student. His appearance was manly, open and free. His eye indicated a nobleness of soul; although his aspect was tinged with melancholy, yet he was naturally cheerful. His disposition was of a romantic cast;

"For far beyond the pride or pomp of power,  
He lov'd the realms of nature to explore;  
With lingering gaze Edinian spring survey'd;  
Morn's fairy splendours; night's gay curtain'd shade,  
The high hoar cliff, the grove's benighting gloom,  
The wild rose, widow'd o'er the mouldering tomb  
The heaven embosom'd sun; the rainbow's die,  
Where lucid forms disport to fancy's eye;



The vernal flower, mild autumn's purpling glow,  
The summer's thunder and the winter's snow."

It was evening when Alonzo arrived at the house of Edgar's cousin. Melissa was at a ball which had been given on a matrimonial occasion in the town. Her cousin waited on Alonzo to the ball, and introduced him to Melissa, who received him with politeness. She was dressed in white, embroidered and spangled with rich silver lace; a silk girdle enwrought and tasselled with gold surrounded her waist; her hair was unadorned except by a wreath of artificial flowers, studded by a single diamond.

After the ball closed they returned to the house of Edgar's cousin. Melissa's partner at the ball was the son of a gentleman of independent fortune in New-London. He was a gay young man, aged about twenty-five. His address was easy, his manners rather voluptuous than refined; confident, but not ungraceful. He led the ton in fashionable circles; gave taste its zest, and was quite a favorite with the ladies generally. His name was Beauman.

Edgar's cousin proposed to detain Alonzo and Melissa a few days, which time they passed in was visiting select friends and in social parties. Beauman an assiduous attendant upon Melissa. He came one afternoon to invite her to ride out;—she was indisposed and excused herself. At evening she proposed walking out with her cousin and his lady; but they were prevented from attending her by unexpected company. Alonzo offered to accompany her. It was one of those beautiful evenings in the month of June, when nature in those parts of America is arrayed in her richest dress. They left the town and walked through fields adjoining the harbor. The moon shone in full lustre, her white beams trem-

ling upon the glassy main, where skiffs and sails of various descriptions were passing and repassing. The shores of Long-Island and the other islands in the harbor, appeared dimly to float among the waves. The air was adorned with the fragrance of surrounding flowers; the sound of instrumental music wafted from the town, rendered sweeter by distance, while the whippoorwill's sprightly song echoed along the adjacent groves. Far in the eastern horizon hung a pile of brazen clouds, which had passed from the north, over which the crinkling red lightning momentarily darted, and at times, long peals of thunder were faintly heard. They walked to a point of the beach, where stood a large rock whose base was washed by every tide. On this rock they seated themselves, and enjoyed a while the splendors of the scene—the drapery of nature. ‘To this place,’ said Melissa, ‘have I taken many a solitary walk, on such an evening as this, and seated on this rock, have I experienced more pleasing sensations than I ever received in the most splendid ball room.’ The idea impressed the mind of Alonzo; it was congenial with the feeling of his soul.

They returned at a late hour, and the next day set out for home. Beauman handed Melissa into the carriage, and he, with Edgar's cousin and his lady attended them on their first day's journey. They put up at night at the house of an acquaintance in Branford. The next morning they parted; Melissa's cousin, his lady and Beauman, returned to New-London; Alonzo and Melissa pursued their journey, and at evening arrived at her father's house, which was in the westerly part of the state.

Melissa was received with joyful tenderness by her friends. Edgar soon recovered from his fall, and cheerfulness again assumed its most pleasing

aspect in the family. Edgar's father was a plain Connecticut farmer. He was rich, and his riches had been acquired by his diligent attention to business. He had loaned money and taken mortgages on lands and houses for securities; and as payment frequently failed, he often had opportunities of purchasing the involved premises, at his own price. He well knew the worth of a shilling, and how to apply it to its best use; and in casting interest, he was sure never to lose a farthing. He had no other children except Edgar and Melissa, on whom he doated. Destitute of literature himself, he had provided the means of obtaining it for his son, and as he was a rigid presbyterian, he considered that Edgar could no where figure so well, or gain more eminence, than in the sacred desk.

The time now arrived when Edgar and Alonzo were to part. The former repaired to New York, where he was to enter upon his professional studies. The latter entered in the office of an eminent attorney in his native town, which was about twenty miles distant from the village in which lived the family of Edgar and Melissa. Alonzo was the frequent guest of this family; for though Edgar was absent, there was still a charm which attracted him thither. If he had admired the manly virtues of the brother, could he fail to adore the sublime graces of the sister? If all the sympathies of the most ardent friendship had been drawn forth towards the former, must not the most tender passions of the soul be attracted by the milder and more refined excellencies of the latter?

Beauman had become the suitor of Melissa; but the distance of residence rendered it inconvenient to visit her often. He came regularly once in two or

three months; of course Alonzo and he sometimes met. Beauman had made no serious pretensions, but his particularity indicated something more than fashionable politeness.

His manners, his independent situation, his family, entitled him to respect. 'It is not probable therefore, that he will be objectionable to Melissa's friends, or to Melissa herself,' said Alonzo, with an involuntary sigh.

But as Beauman's visits to Melissa became more frequent, an increasing anxiety took place in Alonzo's bosom. He wished her to remain single; the idea of losing her by marriage, gave him inexpressible regret. What substitute could supply the happy hours he had passed in her company? What charm could wing the lingering moments when she was gone? In the recess of his studies he could in a few hours, be at the seat of her father: There his cares were dissipated, and the troubles of life, real or imaginary, on light pinions fled away. How different would be the scene when debarred from the unreserved friendship and conversation of Melissa. And unreserved, it could not be, were she not exclusively mistress of herself. But was there not something of a more refined texture than friendship in his predilection for the company of Melissa? If so, why not avow it? His prospects, his family, and of course his pretensions might not be inferior to those of Beauman. But perhaps Beauman was preferred. His opportunities had been greater; he had formed an acquaintance with her. Distance proved no barrier to his addresses. His visits became more and more frequent. Was it not highly probable then that he had secured her affections? Thus reasoned Alonzo, but the reasoning tended not to allay the tempest which was gathering in his bosom. He

ordered his horse, and was in a short time at the seat of Melissa's father.

It was summer, and towards evening when he arrived. Melissa was sitting by the window when he entered the hall. She arose and received him with a smile. 'I have just been thinking of an evening's walk, said she, but had no one to attend me, and you have come just in time to perform that office. I will order tea immediately, while you rest from the fatigues of your journey.'

When tea was served up, a servant entered the room with a letter which he had found in the yard. Melissa received it. 'Tis a letter,' said she 'which I sent by Beaumante a lady in New London, and the careless man has lost it.' Turning to Alonzo, 'I forgot to tell you that your friend Beauman has been with us a few days; he left us this morning.'

'My friend,' replied Alonzo, hastily.

'Is he not your friend?' enquired Melissa.

'I beg pardon, madam,' answered he, 'my mind was absent.'

'He requested us to present his respects to his friend Alonzo,' said she. Alonzo bowed and turned the conversation.

They walked out and took a winding path which led along pleasant fields by a gliding stream, through a little grove and up a sloping eminence, which commanded an extensive prospect of the surrounding country, Long Island, and the sound between that and the main land, and the opening thereof to the distant ocean.

A soft and silent shower had descended; a thousand transitory gems trembled upon the foliage glittering in the western ray. A bright rainbow sat upon the southern cloud, the light gales whispered among the branches, agitated the young harvest to billow

motion, or waved the tops of the distant deep green forest with majestic grandeur. Flocks, herds, and cottages were scattered over the variegated landscape.

Hills piled on hills, receding, faded from the pursuing eye, mingling with the blue mist which, hovered around the extreme verge of the horizon. 'This is a most delightful scene,' said Melissa.

'It is indeed,' replied Alonzo; 'can New-London boast so charming a prospect?'

Melissa. No—yes; indeed I can hardly say. You know, Alonzo, how I am charmed with the rock at the point of the beach.

Alonzo. You told me the happy hours you had passed at that place. Perhaps the company which attended you there, gave the scenery its highest embellishment.

Melissa. I know not how it happened; but you are the only person who ever attended me there.

Al. That is a little surprising.

Mel. Why surprising?

Al. Where was Beauman?

Mel. Perhaps he was not fond of solitude. Besides he was not always my Beauman.

Al. Sometimes.

Mel. Yes, sometimes.

Al. And now always.

Mel. Not this evening.

Al. He formally addresses you.

Mel. Well.

Al. And will soon claim the exclusive privilege so to do.

Mel. That does not follow of course.

Al. Of course, if his intentions are sincere, and the wishes of another should accord therewith.

Mel. Who am I to understand by another?

Al. Melissa. [A pause.]

Mel. See that ship, Alonzo, coming up the sound; how she ploughs through the white foam, while the breezes flutter among the sails, varying with the beams of the sun.

Al. Yes, it is almost down.

Mel. What is almost down?

Al. The sun. Was not you speaking of the sun, madam?

Mel. Your mind is absent, Alonzo; I was speaking of yonder ship.

Al. I beg your pardon, madam. O yes—the ship—it—it bounds with rapid motion over the waves.

A pause ensued. They walked leisurely around the hill, and moved towards home. The sun sunk behind the western hills. Twilight arose in the east, and floated along the air. Darkness began to hover around the woodlands and valleys. The beauties of the landscape slowly receded. ‘This reminds me of our walk at New-London,’ said Melissa. ‘Do you remember it?’ enquired Alonzo. ‘Certainly I do,’ she replied, ‘I shall never forget the sweet persuasive scenery of my favorite rock.’ ‘Nor I neither,’ said Alonzo, with a deep drawn sigh.

The next day Alonzo returned to his studies; but different from his former visits to Melissa, instead of exhilarating his spirits, this had tended to depress them. He doubted whether Melissa was not already engaged to Beauman. His hopes would persuade him that this was not the case; but his fears declared otherwise.

It was some time before Alonzo renewed his visit. In the interim he received a letter from a friend in the neighborhood of Melissa’s father; an extract from which follows:



'We are soon to have a wedding here; you are acquainted with the parties—Melissa ——— and Beauman. Such at least is our opinion from appearances, as Beauman is now here more than half his time—You will undoubtedly be a guest. We had expected that you would have put in your claims, from your particular attention to the lady. She is a fine girl, Alonzo.'

'I shall never be a guest at Melissa's wedding,' said Alonzo as he hastily paced the room. 'but I must once again see her before that event takes place, when I lose her forever.' The next day he repaired to her father's. He enquired for Melissa she was gone with a party to the shores of the sound, attended by Beauman. At evening they returned. Beauman and Alonzo addressed each other with much seeming cordiality. 'You have deceived us, Alonzo,' said Melissa. 'We concluded you had forgotten the road to this place.'

'Was not that a hasty conclusion?' replied Alonzo. 'I think not,' she answered. 'if your long absence should be construed into neglect. But we will hear your excuse, said she, smiling, by and by, and perhaps pardon you.' He thanked her for her condescension.

The next morning Beauman set out for New-London. Alonzo observed that he took a tender leave of Melissa, telling her in a low voice, that he should have the happiness of seeing her again within two or three weeks. After he was gone, as Melissa and Alonzo were sitting in a room alone. 'Well,' said she 'am I to hear your excuses?'

Alonzo. For what, madam?

Mel. For neglecting your friends.

Alonzo I hope it is not so considered madam.



Mel. Seriously, then, why have you staid away so long? Has this place no charms in the absence of my brother?

Al. Would my presence have added to your felicity, Melissa?

Mel. You never came an unwelcome visitor here.

Al. Perhaps I might be sometimes intrusive.

Mel. What times?

Al. When Beauman is your guest.

Mel. I have supposed you were on friendly terms.

Al. We are.

Mel. Why then intrusive?

Al. There are seasons when friendship must yield to a superior claim.

Mel. Perhaps I do not rightly comprehend the force of that remark.

Al. Was Beauman here, my position might be demonstrated.

Mel. I think I understand you.

Al. And acknowledge my observation to be just,

Mel. (hesitating.) Yes,—I believe I must.

Al. And appropriate?

Melissa was silent.

Al. You hesitate, Melissa.

She was silent.

Al. Will you Melissa answer me one question?

Mel. (confused.) If it be a proper one you are entitled to candor.

Al. Are you engaged to Beauman?

Mel. (blushing.) He has asked me the same question concerning you.

Al. Do you prefer him to any other?

Mel. (deeply blushing, her eyes cast upon the floor.) He has made the same enquiry respecting you.

Al. Has he asked your father's permission to address you?

Mel. That I have not suffered him yet to do.

Al. Yet!

Mel. I assure you I have not.

Al. (taking her hand with anxiety.) Melissa, I beg you will deal candidly. I am entitled to no claims, but you know what my heart would ask. I will bow to your decision. Beauman or Alonzo must relinquish their pretensions. We cannot share the blessing.

Mel. (her cheeks suffused with a varying glow, her lips pale, her voice trembles, her eyes still cast down.) My parents have informed me that it is improper to receive the particular addresses of more than one. I am conscious of my inadvertency, and that the reproof is just. One therefore must be dismissed. But—(she blushes.)

A considerable pause ensued. At length Alonzo arose—'I will not press you farther,' said he; 'I know the delicacy of your feelings, I know your sincerity; I will not therefore insist on your performing the painful task of deciding against me. Your conduct in every point of view has been discreet. I could have no just claims, or if I had, your heart must sanction them, or they would be unhallowed and unjustifiable. I shall ever pray for your felicity. Our affections are not under our direction; our happiness depends on our obedience to their mandates. Whatever, then, may be my sufferings you are unblameable and irreproachable. He took his hat in extreme agitation and prepared to take his leave.

Melissa had recovered in some degree from her embarrassment, and collected her scattered spirits. 'Your conduct, Alonzo,' said she, 'is generous and noble. Will you give yourself the trouble and do me the

honor to see me once more ?' 'I will,' said he, 'at any time you shall appoint.' 'Four weeks, then,' she said, 'from this day, honor me with a visit and you shall have my decision, and receive my final answer.' 'I will be punctual to the day,' he replied and bade her adieu.

Alonzo's hours now winged heavily away. His wonted cheerfulness fled; he wooed the silent and solitary haunts of 'musing moping melancholy.' He loved to wander through lonely fields, or along the verge of some lingering stream, 'when dewy twilight rob'd the evening mild,' or 'to trace the forest glen, through which the moon darted her silvery intercepted ray.'

He was fondly indulging a tender passion which preyed upon his peace, and deeply disturbed his repose. He looked anxiously to the hour when Melissa was to make her decision. He wished, yet dreaded the event. In that he foresaw, or thought he foresaw, a withering blight to his budding hopes, and a final consummation to his foreboding fears.—He had pressed Melissa, perhaps too urgently, to a declaration.—Had her predilection been in his favor, would she have hesitated to avow it? Her parents had advised her to relinquish, and had permitted her to retain one suitor, nor had they attempted to influence or direct her choice. Was it not evident then, from her confused hesitation and embarrassment, when solicited to discriminate upon the subject, that her ultimate decision would be in favor of Beauman?

While Alonzo's mind was thus agitated, he received a second letter from his friend in the neighborhood of Melissa. He read the following clause therein with emotions more easily conceived than expressed

‘Melissa’s wedding day is appointed. I need not tell you that Beauman is to be the happy deity of the hymenial sacrifice. I had this from his own declaration. He did not name the positive day, but it is certainly to be soon. You will undoubtedly, however, have timely notice, as a guest. We must pour out a liberal libation to the mystic altar, Alonzo, and twine the nuptial garland with wreaths of joy. Beauman ought to devote a rich offering to so valuable a prize. He has been here for a week, and departed for New-London yesterday, but is shortly to return.’

‘And why have I doubted this event?’ said Alonzo. ‘What infatuation hath thus led me on to the pursuit of fantastic and unreal bliss? I have had, it is true, no positive assurance that Melissa would favor my addresses. But why did she ever receive them? Why did she enchantingly smile upon me?—Why fascinate the tender powers of my soul by that winning mildness, and the favorable display of those complicated and superior attractions which she must have known were irresistible?—Why did she not spurn me from her confidence, and plainly tell me that my attentions were untimely and improper? And now she would have me dance attendance to her decision in favor of Beauman.—Insulting. Let Beauman and she, make, as they have formed, this farcical decision; I absolutely will never attend it.—But stop: I have engaged to see her at an appointed time; my honor is therefore pledged for an interview; it must take place. I shall support it with becoming dignity, and I will convince Melissa and Beauman that I am not the dupe of their caprices. But let me consider—What has Melissa done to deserve censure or reproach? Her brother was my early friend: she has treated me as

a friend to her brother. She was unconscious of the flame which her charms had kindled in my bosom. Her evident embarrassment and confusion on receiving my declaration, witnessed her surprise and prior attachment. What could she do? To save herself the pain of a direct denial, she had appointed a day when her refusal may come in a more delicate and formal manner—and I must meet it.'

At the appointed day Alonzo proceeded to the house of Melissa's father, where he arrived late in the afternoon. Melissa had retired to a little summer house at the end of the garden; a servant conducted Alonzo thither. She was dressed in a flowing robe of white muslin, embroidered with a deep fringe lace. Her hair hung loosely upon her shoulders; she was contemplating a boquet of flowers which she held in her hand. Alonzo fancied she never appeared so lovely. She arose to receive him. 'We have been expecting you some time,' said Melissa; 'we are anxious to inform you that we have just received a letter from my brother, in which he desires us to present you his most friendly respects, and complains of your not writing to him lately so frequently as usual.' Alonzo thanked her for the information; said that business prevented him; he esteemed him as his most valuable friend, and would be more particular in future.

'We have been thronged with company for several days,' said Melissa. 'Once a year my father celebrates his birth day, when we are honored with so numerous a company of uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews and neices, that were you present, you would suppose we were connected with half the families in Connecticut. The last of this company took their departure yesterday, and I have only to regret that I have for nearly a week been prevented from visit-

ing my favorite hill, to which you attended me when you last was here. It is much improved since then: I have had a little arbor built under the large tree on its summit: you will have no objection to view it, Alonzo.' He assured her he accepted the invitation with pleasure, and towards evening they resorted to the place and seated themselves in the arbor.

It was the beginning of Autumn, and a yellow hue was spread over the fading charms of nature. The withering forest began to shed its decaying foliage, which the light gales pursued along the russet fields. The low sun extended the lengthening shadows;—curling smoke ascended from the surrounding cottages. A thick fog crept along the vallies; a gray mist hovered over the tops of the mountains. The glassy surface of the sound glittered to the sun's departing ray. The solemn herds lowed in solemn symphony. The autumnal insects in sympathetic wafting, plaintively predicted their approaching fate. 'The scene is changed since we last visited this place,' said Melissa; 'the gay charms of summer are beginning to decay, and must soon yield their splendors to the despoiling hand of winter.'

'That will be the case,' said Alonzo, 'before I shall have the pleasure of your company here again.'

Mel. That probably may be, though it is nearly two months yet to winter.

Al. Great changes may take place within that time.

Mel. Yes, changes must take place; but nothing I hope, to embitter present prospects.

Al. (peevishly.) As it respects yourself, I trust not, madam.

Mel. (tenderly.) And I sincerely hope not, as it respects you, Alonzo.

Al. That wish, I believe, is vain.

Mel. Why so ominous a prediction?

Al. The premises from which it is drawn are correct.

Mel. Your feelings accord with the season, Alonzo; you are melancholy. Shall we return.

Al. I ask your pardon, madam; I know I am unsociable. You speak of returning: you know the occasion of my being here.

Mel. For the purpose of visiting your friends, I presume.

Al. And no other?

She made no reply.

Al. You cannot have forgotten your own appointment, and consequent engagement?

She made no answer.

Al. I know, Melissa, that you are incapable of duplicity or evasions. I have promised, and now repeat the declaration, that I will silently submit to your decision. This you have engaged to make, and this is the time you have appointed. The pains of present suspense can scarcely be surpassed by the pangs of disappointment. On your part you have nothing to fear. I trust you have candidly determined and will decide explicitly.

Mel. (sighing.) I am placed in an exceedingly delicate situation.

Al. I know you are; but your own honor, your own peace, require that you should extricate yourself from the perplexing embarrassment.

Mel. I am sensible they do. It must—it shall be done.

Al. And the sooner it is done the better.

Mel. That I am convinced of. I now know that I have been inadvertently indiscreet. I have admitted the addresses of Beauman and yourself, with-



out calculating or expecting the consequences. You have both treated me honorably, and with respect. You are both on equal grounds as to your character and standing in life. With Beauman I became first acquainted. As it relates to him, some new arrangements have taken place since you were here which——

Al. (interrupting her with emotion.)—Of those arrangements I am acquainted.

Mel. (surprised.) By what means were you informed thereof?

Al. I received it from a friend in your neighborhood.

A considerable pause ensued.

Al. You see, Melissa, I am prepared for the event.—She was silent.

Al. I have mentioned before, that, whatever be your decision, no impropriety can attach to you. I might not, indeed, from various circumstances, and from the information I possess, I perhaps should not have given you farther trouble on the occasion, had it not been from your own direction and appointment. And I am now willing to retire without further explanation, without giving you the pain of an express decision, if you think the measure expedient. Your declaration can only be a matter of form, the consequence of which I know, and my proposition may save your feelings.

Mel. No, Alonzo; my reputation depends on my adherence to my first determination; justice to yourself and to Beauman also demand it. After what has passed I should be considered as acting capriciously and inconsistently, should I depart from it. Beauman will be here to-morrow, and ——

Al. To-morrow, madam?



Mel. He will be here to-morrow, and you must consent to stay with us until that time; the matter shall then be decided.

Al. I—yes, it shall be as you say, madam. Make your arrangements as you please.

Evening had now spread her dusky mantle over the face of nature. The stars glistened in the sky. The breezes rustling wing was in the tree. The distant sound of the low murmuring brook, and the far off water-fall, were faintly heard. The twinkling fire-fly arose from the surrounding verdure and illuminated the air with a thousand transient gleams. The mingling discordance of curs and watch-dogs echoed in the distant village, from whence the frequent lights darted their pale lustre through the gloom. The solitary whippoorwills stationed themselves along the woody glens, the groves and rocky pastures, and sang a requiem to departed summer. A dark cloud was rising in the west, across whose gloomy front the vivid lightning bent its forked spires.

Alonzo and Melissa moved slowly to the village; she appeared enraptured with the melancholy splendors of the evening, but the other subject engaged the mental attention of Alonzo.

Beauman arrived the next day. He gave his hand to Alonzo with seeming warmth of friendship. If it was reciprocated, it must have been affected. There was no alteration in the manners and conversation of Melissa: her conversation, as usual was sprightly and interesting. After dinner she retired, and her father requested Alonzo and Beauman to withdraw with him to a private room. After they were seated, the old gentleman thus addressed them:

‘I have called you here gentlemen, to perform my duty as a parent to my daughter, and as a friend to

you. You are both suitors to Melissa; while your addresses were merely formal they were innocent; but when they became serious they were dangerous. Your pretensions I consider equal, and between honorable pretenders, who are worthy of my daughter, I shall not attempt to influence her choice. That choice, however, can rest only on one: she has engaged to decide between you. I am come to make, in her name, this decision. The following are my terms:—No quarrel or difficulty shall arise between you, gentlemen, in consequence of her determination. Nothing shall go abroad respecting the affair; it shall be ended under my roof. As soon as I have pronounced her declaration, you shall both depart and absent my house for at least two weeks, as it would be improper for my daughter to see either of you at present: after that period I shall be happy to receive your visits.’—Alonzo and Beauman pledged their honor to abide implicitly to these injunctions. Her father then observed—‘This, gentlemen, is all I require. I have observed that I considered your pretensions equal: so has my daughter treated them. You have both made professions to her; she has appointed a time to answer you. That time has arrived, and I now inform you that she has decided in favor of Alonzo.’

The declaration of Melissa’s father burst upon the mental powers of Beauman like a sudden and tremendous clap of thunder on the deep and sultry silence of night. Unaccustomed to disappointment he had calculated on success. His addresses to the ladies had ever been honorably received.

Melissa was the first whose charms were capable of rendering them sincere. He was not ignorant of Alonzo’s attention to her; it gave him however but little uneasiness. He believed that his superior

qualifications would eclipse the pretensions of his rival. He considered himself a connoisseur in character, especially in the character of the ladies. He conformed to their taste; he flattered their foibles and obsequiously bowed to the minutiae of female volatility. He considered himself skilled in the language of the heart; and he trusted from his pre-eminent powers in the science of affection, he had only to see, to sue and to conquer. He had frankly offered his hand to Melissa, and pressed her for a decisive answer. This from time to time she suspended, and finally appointed a day to give him and Alonzo a determinate answer, though neither knew the arrangements made with the other.

Finding however, the dilemma in which she was placed, she had previously consulted her parents. Her father had no objection to her choosing between two persons of equal claims to affluence and reputation, this choice she had made and her father was considered the most proper person to pronounce it.

When Beauman had urged his suit to Melissa, he supposed that her hesitation, delays and suspensions, were only the effects of maiden diffidence and timidity. He had no suspicions of her ultimately rejecting it; and when she finally named the day of decision, he was confident she would decide in his favor. These sentiments he had communicated to the person who had written to Alonzo, intimating that Melissa had fixed a time which was to crown his happiest wishes.

He had listened therefore attentively to the word of Melissa's father, momentarily expecting to hear himself declared the favorite choice of the fair.

What then must have been his disappointment when the name of Alonzo was pronounced instead of his own! The highly finished scene of pleasure

and future prosperity which his ardent imagination had depicted, had vanished in a moment. The rainbow glories which gilded his youthful horizon, had faded in an instant—the bright sun of his early hopes had set in mournful darkness. The summons of death would not have been more unexpected, or more shocking to his imagination.

Very different were the sensations which inspired the bosom of Alonzo. He had not even calculated on a decision in his own favor, he believed that Beauman would be the choice of Melissa. She had told him that the form of decision was necessary to save appearances: with this form he complied because she desired it, not because he expected the result would be in his favor. He had not therefore attended to the words of Melissa's father with that eagerness which favorable anticipations commonly produce. But when his name was mentioned; when he found he was the choice—the happy favorite of Melissa's affection, every tender passion of his soul became interested, and was suddenly aroused to the refinements of sensibility. Like an electric shock, it reanimated his whole frame, and vibrated every nerve of his heart. The glooms which hung about his mind were dissipated, and the bright morning of joy broke in upon his soul.

Thus were the expectations of Alonzo and Beauman disappointed—how differently, the sequel has shown.

Melissa's father retired immediately after pronouncing the declaration; the two young gentlemen also, soon after, withdrew. Alonzo saw the tempest which tore the bosom of his rival, and he pitied him from his heart.

A fortnight passed and Alonzo felt all that anxiety and impatience which a separation from a beloved

object can produce. He framed a thousand excuses to visit Melissa, yet he feared a visit might be premature. He was however necessitated to make a journey to a distant part of the country, after which he resolved to see Melissa. He performed his business and was returning. It was toward evening, and the day had been uncommonly sultry for the autumnal season. A rising shower blackened the western hemisphere; the dark vapor ascended in folding ridges, and the thunder rolled at a distance. Alonzo saw he should be overtaken. He discovered an elegant seat about one hundred yards distant from the road; thither he hastened to gain shelter from the approaching storm. The owner of the mansion met him at the door, politely invited him to alight and walk in, while a servant stood ready to take his horse. He was ushered into a large room neatly furnished, where the family and several young ladies were sitting. As Alonzo glanced his eyes hastily round the room, he thought he recognized a familiar countenance. A hurried succession of confused ideas for a moment crossed his recollection. In a moment, however, he discovered that it was Melissa. By this unexpected meeting they were both completely embarrassed. Melissa, however, arose, and in rather a confused manner, introduced Alonzo, as the classmate of her brother, to the family of Mr. Simpson and the company.

The rain continued most part of the afternoon. Alonzo was invited, and consented to stay all night. A moonlight evening succeeded the shower, which invited the young people to walk in an adjoining garden. Melissa told Alonzo that Mr. Simpson was a distant relative of her father; his family consisted of his wife, two amiable daughters not far from Melissa's age, and one son named William, about seventeen years old. She had been invited there to

pass a week, and expected to return within two days. And she added, smiling, 'perhaps, Alonzo, we may have an opportunity once more to visit the bower on my prospect hill, before winter entirely destroys the remaining beauties of the summer.' Alonzo felt the force of the remark. He recollected the conversation when they were last at the place she mentioned; and he well remembered his feelings on that occasion.

'Great changes, indeed,' he replied, 'have taken place since we were last there: that they are productive of unexpected and unexampled happiness to me, is due, Melissa, to you alone.' Alonzo departed the next morning, appointing the next week to visit Melissa at her father's house.

Thus were the obstacles removed which presented a barrier to the united wishes of Alonzo and Melissa. They had not, it is true, been separated by wide seas, unfeeling parents or the rigorous laws of war; but troubles, vexations, doubts and difficulties, had thus far attended them, which had now disappeared, and they calculated on no unpropitious event which might thwart their future union. All the time that Alonzo could spare from his studies was devoted to Melissa, and their parents began to calculate on joining their hands as soon as Alonzo's professional term of study was completed.

The troubles which gave rise to the disseveration of England from America had already commenced, which broke out the ensuing spring into actual hostilities, by the battle of Lexington, followed soon after by the battle of Bunker Hill. The panic and general bustle which took place in America on these events, is yet well remembered by many. They were not calculated to impress the mind of Melissa with the most pleasing sensations. She foresaw that the

burden of the war must rest on the American youth and she trembled in anticipation for the fate of Alonzo. He, with others, should the war continue, must take the field, in defence of his country. The effects of such a separation were dubious and gloomy. Alonzo and she frequently discoursed, and they agreed to form the mystic union previous to any wide separation.

One event tended to hasten this resolution. The attorney in whose office Alonzo was clerk, received a commission in the new raised American army, and marched to the lines near Boston. His business was therefore suspended, and Alonzo returned to the house of his father. He considered that he could not long remain a mere spectator of the contest, and that it might soon be his duty to take the field; he therefore concluded it best to hasten his marriage with Melissa. She consented to the proposition, and their parents made the necessary arrangements for the event. They had even fixed upon the place which was to be the future residence of this happy couple. It was a pleasantly situated village, surrounded by rugged elevations, which gave an air of serenity and seclusion to the valley they encircled. On the south arose a spacious hill, which was ascended by a gradual acclivity; its sides and summit interspersed with orchards, arbors, and cultivated fields. On the west, forests unevenly lifted their rude heads, with here and there a solitary field, newly cleared and thinly scattered with cottages. To the east the eye extended over a soil, at one time swelling into craggy elevations, and at another spreading itself into vales of the most enchanting verdure. To the north it extended over a vast succession of mountains, wooded to their summits, and throwing their shadows over intervals of equal



wilderness till at length it was arrested in its excursions by the blue mists which hovered over mountains more grand, majestic, and lofty.\* A rivulet which rushed from the hills formed a little lake on the borders of the village, which beautifully reflected the cottages from its transparent bosom. Amidst a cluster of locusts and weeping willows, rose the spire of the church, in the ungarnished decency of Sunday neatness. Fields, gardens, meadows, and pastures were spread around the valley, and the sides of the declivities, yielding in their season the rich flowers, fruits and foliage of spring, summer and autumn. The inhabitants of this modern Auvernum were mostly farmers. They were mild sociable, moral and diligent. The produce of their own flocks and fields gave them most of their food and clothing. To dissipation they were strangers, and the luxuries of their tables were few.

Such was the place for the residence of Alonzo and Melissa. They had visited the spot, and were enraptured with its pensive romantic beauties. A site was marked out whereon to erect their family mansion. It was on a little eminence which sloped gradually to the lake, in the most pleasant part of the village. 'Here,' said Alonzo one day to Melissa, 'will we pass our days in all that felicity of mind which the chequered scenes of life admit. In the spring we will rove among the flowers. In summer, we will gather strawberries in yonder fields or whortleberries from the adjacent shrubbery. The breezes of fragrant morning, and the sighs of the evening gale, will be mingled with the songs of the thousand various birds which frequent the surround-

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\*Some who read this description will readily recognize the village here described.



ing groves. We will gather the bending fruits of autumn, and we will listen to the hoarse voice of winter, its whistling winds, its driving snow, and rattling hail, with delight.'

The bright gems of joy glistened in the eyes of Melissa. With Alonzo she anticipated approaching happiness, and her bosom beat in rapturous unison.

Winter came on; it rapidly passed away. Spring advanced and the marriage day was appointed.

The spring opened with the din of preparation throughout America for defensive war. It now was found that vigorous measures must be pursued to oppose the torrent which was preparing to overwhelm the colonies, which had now been dis severed from the British empire, by the declaration of independence. The continental army was now raising, and great numbers of American youth volunteered in the service of their country. A large army of reinforcements was soon expected from England to land on our shores, and 'the confused noise of the warriors, and garments rolled in blood,' were already anticipated.

Alonzo had received a commission in a regiment of militia, and was pressed by several young gentlemen of his acquaintance, who had entered the army, to join it also. He had an excuse. His father was a man in extensive business, was considerably past the prime of life, had a number of agents and clerks under him, but began to grow unable to attend to the various and burthensome duties and demands of a mercantile life.

Alonzo was his only son; his assistance therefore became necessary until, at least, his father could bring his business to a close, which he was now about to effect. Alonzo stated these facts to his friends; told them that on every occasion he should be ready to fly to the post of danger when his coun-

try was invaded, and that as soon as his father's affairs should be settled, he would, if necessary, willingly join the army.

The day now rapidly approached when Alonzo was to make Melissa his own. Preparations for the Hymeneal ceremony were making, and invitations had already gone abroad. Edgar, the brother of Melissa, had entered the army in the capacity of chaplain. He was soon expected home, where he intended to tarry until the consummation of the nuptials, before he set out for the camp. Letters recently received from him, informed that he expected to be at his father's in three or four days.

About three weeks previous to the appointed marriage day, Alonzo and Melissa one afternoon rode out to the village which had been chosen for their future residence. Their carriage stopped at the only inn in the place, and from thence they walked around this modern Vaucluse, charmed with the secluded beauties of its situation. They passed a little time at the spot selected for the habitation; they projected the structure of the buildings, planned the gardens, the artificial groves, the walks, the mead, the fountains, and the green retreat of the summer house, and they already saw, in anticipation, the various domestic blessings and felicities with which they were to be surrounded.

They took tea at the inn, and prepared to return. It was at the latter end of the month of May, and nature was adorned in the bridal ornaments of spring; the sun was sunk behind the groves, which cast the sombre shades over the valley, while the retiring beams of day adorned the distant eastern eminences with yellow lustre.

The birds sung melodiously in the grove, the air was freshened by light western breezes, bearing up-

on their wings all the entrancing odours of the season. Around the horizon clouds raised their brazen summits, based on the black vapor of approaching night.

They slowly ascended the hill south of the town, where they paused a few moments to enjoy the splendors of the evening scene. This hill, which commanded a prospect of all the surrounding country, the distant sound, and the adjacent towns and villages, perhaps one of the most picturesque draperies painted by nature. Alonzo attended Melissa to her father's, and the next day returned home.

His father had been absent for three or four days to one of the commercial seaports, on business with some merchants with whom he was connected in trade. He returned next day after Alonzo got home:—his aspect and his conversation were marked with an assumed and unmeaning cheerfulness. At supper he ate nothing, discoursed much, but in an unconnected and hurried manner, interrupted by long pauses, in which he appeared to be buried in contemplation.

After supper he asked Alonzo if it were not possible that his marriage with Melissa could be consummated within a few days. Alonzo started at so unexpected a question, replied that such a proposal would be considered extraordinary, perhaps improper: besides when Melissa had fixed the day, she mentioned that she had an uncle near Charleston, South Carolina, whose daughter was to pass the summer with Melissa, and was expected to arrive before the appointed day. It would, he said, be a delicate point for him to request her to anticipate the nuptials, unless he could give some cogent reasons for so doing; and at present he was not apprised that any such existed. His father after a few

moments hesitation, answered, 'I have reasons, which, when told'—here he stopped, suddenly arose, hastily walked the room, in much visible agony of mind, and then retired to his chamber.

Alonzo and his mother were much amazed at so strange a proceeding. They could form no conjecture of its cause or its consequence. Alonzo passed a sleepless night. His father's slumbers were interrupted. He would frequently start up in bed, then sink in restless sleep, with incoherent mutterings, and plaintive moans. In the morning when he appeared at breakfast, his countenance wore the marks of dejection and anguish.

He scarcely spoke a word and after the cloth was removed, he ordered all to withdraw except his wife and Alonzo; when, with emotions that spoke the painful feelings of his bosom, he thus addressed them:

'For more than forty years I have toiled early and late to acquire independence and ease for myself and family. To accomplish this, I became connected with some English importing merchants in a seaport town, and went largely into the English trade. Success crowned our endeavors; on balancing our accounts two years ago, we found that our expectations were answered, and that we were now sufficiently wealthy to close business, which some proposed to do: it was however agreed to make one effort more, as some favorable circumstances appeared to offer, in which we adventured very largely, on a fair calculation of liberal and extensive proceeds.

'Before returns could be made, the war came on, embarrassments ensued, and by indubitable intelligence lately received, we find that our property in England has been sequestered; five of our ships la-

den with English goods, lying in English harbors, and just ready to sail for America, have been seized as lawful prizes. Added to this, three vessels from the Indies, laden with island produce, have been taken on their homeward bound voyage, and one lost on her return from Holland. This wreck of fortune I might have survived, had I to sustain only my equal dividend of the loss. But of the merchants with whom I have been connected not one remains to share the fate of the event; all have absconded or secreted themselves. To attempt to compound with my creditors would be of little avail; my whole fortune will not pay one fourth of the debts; so that compound or not the consequence to me is inevitable ruin.

‘To abscond would not secure me, as most of my remaining property is vested in real estate. And even if it would, I could not consent to it: I could not consent to banish myself from my country; to flee like a felon; to skulk from society with the base view of defrauding my creditors. No, I have lived honestly, and honestly will I die. By fair application and long industry my wealth has been obtained; and it shall never justly be said, that the reputation of my latter days was stained with acts of baseness. I have notified and procured a meeting of the creditors, and have laid the matters before them. Some appeared favorable to me; others insinuated that we were all connected in fraudulent designs to swindle our creditors. This I repelled with becoming spirit, and was in consequence threatened with immediate prosecution. Whatever may be the event, I had some hopes that your happiness, Alonzo, might be secured. Hence I proposed your union with Melissa, before our misfortunes should be promulgated. Your parents are old; a little will

serve the residue of their days. With your acquisitions you may make your way in life. I shall have no property to give you; but I would still wish you to secure that which you prize far above, and without which both honors and emoluments are unimportant and worthless."

At this moment a loud rap at the door interrupted the discourse, and three men were ushered in, which proved to be the sheriff and his attendants, sent by the more inexorable creditors of Alonzo's father and company, to level on the property of the former, which orders they faithfully executed, by seizing the lands, tenements and furniture, and finally arresting the body of the old gentleman, which was soon released by his friendly neighbors becoming bail for his appearance; but the property was soon after sold at public vendue, at less than half its value, and Alonzo's father and mother were compelled to abandon the premises, and take shelter in a little hut, belonging to a neighboring farmer illy and temporarily furnished by the gratuitous liberality of a few friends.

We will not stop the reader to moralize on this disastrous event. The feelings of the family can better be conceived than detailed. Hurléd in a moment from the lofty summit of affluence to the low and barren vale of poverty! Philosophy came to the aid of the parents, but who can realize the feelings of the son! Thus suddenly cut short of his prospects, not only of future independence, but even of support, what would be the event of his suit to Melissa, and stipulated marriage? Was it not probable that her father would now cancel the contract? Could she consent to be his wife, in his present penurious situation? And indeed, could he himself consent to make her his wife, to make her miserable?

In this agitated frame of mind he received a letter from his friend in Melissa's neighborhood, requesting him to come immediately to his house, whither he repaired the following day. This person had ever been the unchanging friend of Alonzo; he had heard of the misfortunes of his family, and he deeply sympathised in his distress. He had lately married and settled in life: his name was Vincent.

When Alonzo arrived at the house of his friend, he was received with the same disinterested ardor he had ever been in the day of his most unbounded prosperity. After being seated, Vincent told him that the occasion of his sending for him was to propose the adoption of certain measures which he doubted not might be considered highly beneficial as it respected his future peace and happiness. 'Your family misfortunes,' continued Vincent, 'have reached the ears of Melissa's father. I know that old gentleman too well to believe he will consent to receive you as his son-in-law, under your present embarrassments. Money is the god to which he implicitly bows. The case is difficult, but not insurmountable. You must first see Melissa; she is now in the next room. I will introduce you in; converse with her, after which I will lay my plan before you.'

Alonzo entered the room; Melissa was sitting by a window which looked into a pleasant garden, and over verdant meadows whose tall grass waved to the evening breeze. Farther on, low vallies spread their umbrageous thickets, where the dusky shadows of night had begun to assemble.

On high hills beyond, the tops of lofty forests, majestically moved by the billowy gales, caught the sun's last ray. Fleecy summer clouds hovered around



the verge of the western horizon, spangled with silvery tints or fringed with the gold of evening.

A mournfully murmuring rivulet purled at a little distance from the garden, on the borders of a small grove, from whence the American wild dove wafted her sympathetic moaning to the ear of Melissa. She sat leaning on a small table by the window, which was thrown up. Her attention was fixed. She did not perceive Vincent and Alonzo as they entered. They advanced towards her. She turned, started, and arose. With a melancholy smile, and tremulous voice, 'I supposed,' she said, 'that it was Mrs Vincent, who was approaching, as she has just left the room.' Her countenance appeared to be dejected, which on seeing Alonzo, lighted up into a languid sprightliness. It was evident she had been weeping.

Vincent retired, and Alonzo and Melissa seated themselves by the window. 'I have broken in upon your solitude, perhaps, too unseasonably,' said Alonzo. 'It is however, the fault of Vincent:—he invited me to walk into the room, but did not inform me that you were alone.' 'Your presence was sudden and unexpected, but not unseasonable,' replied Melissa. 'I hope that you did not consider any formality necessary in your visits, Alonzo.'

Alonzo. I once did not think so. Now I know not what to think—I know not how to act. You have heard of the misfortunes of my father's family, Melissa?

Mel. Yes; I have heard the circumstances attending that event—an event in which no one could be more deeply interested except the immediate sufferers, than myself.

Al. Your father is also acquainted with my present situation?



Mel. He is.

Al. How did he receive the intelligence ?

Mel. With deep regret.

Al. And forbade you to admit my addresses any longer ?

Mel. No, not absolutely.

Al. If even in an unqualified or indirect manner, it is proper I should know it.

Mel. It certainly is. Soon after we received the intelligence of your family misfortunes, my father came into the room where I was sitting; 'Melissa,' said he, 'your conduct has ever been that of a dutiful child; mine of an indulgent parent. My first, my ultimate wish is, to see my children, when settled in life, happy and honorably respected. For this purpose, I have bestowed on them a proper education, and design suitably to apportion my property between them. On their part, it is expected they will act prudently and discreetly, especially in those things which concern their future peace and welfare. The principal requisite to ensure this is a proper connexion in marriage.' Here my father paused a considerable time, and then continued—'I know, my child that your situation is a very delicate one. Your marriage day is appointed; it was appointed under the fairest prospects; by the failure of Alonzo's father, those prospects have become deeply darkened, if not totally obliterated.

'To commit your fortune through life to a person unable to support you, would be hazardous in the extreme. The marriage day, can at least, be suspended; perhaps something more favorable may appear. At any rate, I have too much confidence in your discretion, to suppose that you will by any rash act, bring either poverty or reproach upon yourself or your connexions.' Thus spoke my father, and immediately withdrew

‘In our present dilemma,’ said Alonzo, ‘what is proper to be done.’

‘It is difficult to determine,’ replied Melissa. ‘Should my father expressly forbid our union, he will go all lengths to carry his commands into effect. Although a tender parent, he is violent in his prejudices, and resolute in his purposes. I would advise you to call at my father’s house to-morrow with your usual freedom. Whatever may be the event I shall deal sincerely with you. Mr. and Mrs. Vincent are now my only confidants. From them you will be enabled to obtain information, should I be debarred from seeing you. I am frequently here; they told me they expected you, but at what day was not known. Mrs. Vincent has been my friend and associate from my earliest years. Vincent you know. In them we can place the utmost confidence. My reliance on providence, I trust, will never be shaken; but my future prospects, at present, are dark and gloomy.’

‘Let us not despair,’ answered Alonzo, ‘perhaps these gloomy clouds which now hover around us, will yet be dissipated by the bright beams of joy. Innocence and virtue are the cares of heaven. There lies my hope. To-morrow, as you propose, I will call at your father’s.’

Melissa now prepared to return home; a whip-poorwill tuned its nightly song at a little distance; but the sound, so cheerful and sprightly, now passed heavily over their hearts.

When Alonzo returned, Vincent unfolded the plan he had projected. ‘No sooner,’ said he, ‘was I informed of your misfortunes, than I was convinced that Melissa’s father would endeavor to dissolve your intended union with his daughter. I have known him many years, and however he may doat on his children, or value their happiness, he will not

hesitate to sacrifice his other feelings to the acquirement of riches. It appeared that you had but one resource left. You and Melissa are now united by the most solemn ties—by every rite except those which are merely ceremonial. These I would advise you to enter into, and trust to the consequences. Mrs. Vincent has proposed the scheme to Melissa; but implicitly accustomed to filial obedience, she shudders at the idea of a clandestine marriage. But when her father shall proceed to rigorous measures, she will, I think consent to the alternative. And this measure, once adopted, her father must consent also; or, if not, you secure your own happiness, and what you esteem more, that of Melissa.'

'But you must be sensible of my inability to support her as she deserves,' replied Alonzo, 'even should she consent to it.'

'The world is before you,' answered Vincent; 'you have friends, you have acquirements, which will not fail you. In a country like this, you can hardly fail of obtaining a competency, which with the other requisites, will ensure your independence and felicity.'

Alonzo informed Vincent what had been agreed upon between Melissa and himself, respecting his visiting her on the morrow; 'after which,' he said, 'we will discourse further on the subject.'

The next day Alonzo repaired to the house of Melissa's father. As he approached, he saw Melissa sitting in a shady recess at one end of the garden near which the road passed. She was leaning with her head upon her hand, in a pensive posture; a deep dejection, was depicted in her features, which enlivened into a transient glow as soon as she saw Alonzo. She arose, met him and invited him into the house.

Alonzo was received with a cold reserve by all except Melissa. Her father saluted him with a distant and retiring bow, as he passed with Melissa to her room. As soon as they were seated, a maiden aunt who had doubled her teens, outlived many of her suitors, and who had lately come to reside with the family, entered and seated herself by the window, alternately humming a tune, and impudently staring at Alonzo, without speaking a word, except snappishly to contradict Melissa in any thing she advanced, which the latter passed off with only a faint smile.

This interruption was not of long continuance. Melissa's father entered, and requested the two ladies to withdraw, which was instantly done. He then addressed Alonzo as follows:—'When I gave consent for you to marry my daughter, it was on the conviction that your future resources would be adequate to support her honorably and independently. Circumstances have since taken place, which render this point extremely doubtful. Parental duty and affection demands that I should know your means and prospects before I sanction a proceeding which may reduce my child to penury and want.'

He paused for a reply, but Alonzo was silent. He continued—'You yourself must acknowledge, that to burthen yourself with the expense of a family; to transfer a woman from affluence to poverty, without even an object in view to provide for either, would be the height of folly and extravagance.' Again he paused, but Alonzo was still silent. He proceeded—'Could you, Alonzo, suffer life, when you see the wife of your bosom, probably your infant children, pining in misery for want of bread. And what else have you to expect if you marry in

your present situation? You have friends and well wishers; but which of them will advance you four or five thousand pounds, as a gratuity? My daughter must be supported according to her rank and standing in life. Are you enabled to do this? If not, you cannot reasonably suppose that I shall consent to your marrying her. You may say that your acquirements, your prudence and your industry, will procure you a handsome support. This well may do in single life; but to depend on these for the future exigencies of a family, is hazarding peace, honor and reputation at a single game of chance. If, therefore, you have no resources or expectations but such as these, your own judgment will teach you the necessity of immediately relinquishing all pretensions to the hand of Melissa'— and immediately left the room.

Why was Alonzo speechless through the whole of this discourse?—What reply could he have made? What were the prospects before him but penury, want, misery and woe! Where indeed, were the means by which Melissa was to be shielded from poverty, if connected with his fortunes. The idea was not new, but it came upon him with redoubled anguish. He arose and looked around for Melissa, but she was not to be seen. He left the house and walked slowly towards Vincent's. At a little distance he met Melissa, who had been strolling in an adjoining avenue. He informed her of all that had passed, it was no more than they both expected, yet it was a shock their fortitude could scarcely contain. Disappointment seldom finds her votaries prepared to receive her.

Melissa told Alonzo that her father's determinations were unchangable; that his sister (the before mentioned maiden lady) held a considerable in-

fluence over him and dictated the concerns of the family; and that from her there was nothing to hope in their favor. Her mother she said was her friend, but could not contradict the will of her father. Her brother would be at home in a few days; how he would act on this occasion she was unable to say: but were he even their friend he would have but feeble influence with her father and aunt. 'What is to be the end of these troubles,' continued Melissa, 'it is impossible to foresee. Let us trust in the mercy of heaven and submit to its dispensations.'

Alonzo and Melissa, in their happier days, had, when absent, corresponded by letters. This method it was now thought best to relinquish. It was agreed that Alonzo should come frequently to Vincent's, where Melissa would meet him as she could find opportunities. Having concluded on this, Melissa returned home, and Alonzo to the house of his friend.

Vincent, after Alonzo had related his reception at Melissa's father's, urged the plan he had projected, of a private marriage. Alonzo replied, that even should Melissa consent to it, which he much doubted, it must be a measure of the last resort, and adopted only when all others became fruitless.

The next morning Alonzo returned to the hut where his aged parents now dwelt. His bosom throbbed with keen anguish. His own fate, unconnected with that of Melissa, he considered of little consequence. But what was to become of Melissa, what of himself, what of his parents!—'Alas,' said Alonzo, 'I now perceive what it is to want the good things of this life.'

Alonzo's father was absent when he arrived, but returned soon after. A beam of joy gleamed upon his withered countenance as he entered the house.

were it not, Alonzo, for your unhappy situation,' said he, 'we should once more be restored to peace and comfort. A few persons who were indebted to me, finding that I was to be sacrificed by my unfeeling creditors, reserved those debts in their hands, and have now paid me, amounting to something more than five hundred pounds. With this I have purchased a small but well cultivated farm, with convenient tenements. I have enough left to purchase what stock and other materials I need; and to spare some for your present exigencies, Alonzo.'

Alonzo thanked his father for his kindness; but told him from his former liberality he had yet sufficient for his wants, and that he should soon find business which would amply support him. 'But your affair with Melissa,' asked his father, 'how is it likely to terminate?' 'Favorably, I hope sir,' answered Alonzo. He could not consent to disturb the tranquility of his parents by reciting his own wretchedness.

A week passed away. Alonzo saw his parents removed to their little farm, which was to be managed by his father and a hired man. He saw them comfortably seated; he saw them serenely blest in the calm pleasures of returning peace, and a ray of joy illuminated his troubled bosom.

'Again the youth his wonted life regain'd  
A transient sparkle in his eye obtain'd,  
A bright impassion'd cheering glow, express'd  
The pleas'd sensation of his tender breast:  
But soon dark glooms the feeble smiles o'erspread;  
Like morn's gray hues, the fading splendors fled  
Returning anguish froze his feeling soul,  
Deep sighs burst forth, and tears began to roll.'



He thought of Melissa, from whom he had heard nothing since he last saw her. He thought of the difficulties which surrounded him. He thought of the barriers which were opposed to his happiness and the felicity of Melissa, and he set out for the house of Vincent.

Alonzo arrived at the residence of Vincent near the close of the day: Vincent and his lady were at tea with several young ladies who had passed the afternoon with Mrs. Vincent. Alonzo cast an active glance around the company in hopes to find Melissa, but she was not there. He was invited and accepted a seat at table. After tea Vincent led him into an adjoining room. 'You have come in good time,' said he. 'Something must speedily be done, or you lose Melissa forever. The day after you were here, her father received a letter from Beauman, in which after mentioning the circumstance of your father's insolvency, he hinted that the consequence would probably be a failure of her proposed marriage with you which might essentially injure the reputation of a lady of her standing in life: to prevent which, and to place her beyond the reach of calumny, he offered to marry her at any appointed day, provided he had her free consent.

'As Beauman, by the recent death of his father, had been put in possession of a splendid fortune, the proposition allured her father, who wrote him a complaisant answer, with an invitation to his house. He then strove to extort a promise from Melissa, that she would break off all connexion with you, see you no more, and admit the addresses of Beauman.

To this she could not consent. She urged, that by the consent of her parents she was engaged to you by the most sacred ties. That to her father's



will she had hitherto yielded implicit obedience, but that hastily to break the most solemn obligation, formed and sanctioned by his approbation and direction, was what her conscience would not permit her to do. Were he to command her to live single, life might be endured; but to give her hand to any except you would be to purjure those principles of truth and justice which he himself had ever taught her to hold most inviolable. Her father grew outrageous; charged her with disobedience, with a blind inconsiderate perverseness, by which she would bring ruin upon herself, and indelible disgrace upon her family. She answered only with her tears. Her mother interposed, and endeavored to appease his anger; but he spurned her from him, and rushed out of the room, uttering a threat that force should succeed persuasion, if his commands were not obeyed. To add to Melissa's distress, Beauman arrived at her father's yesterday; and I hope, in some measure to alleviate it, Edgar, her brother, came this morning.—Mrs. Vincent has dispatched a message to inform Melissa of your arrival, and to desire her to come here immediately. She will undoubtedly comply with the invitation, if not prevented by something extraordinary. I should have written you had I not hourly expected you.'

Mrs. Vincent now came to the door of the room and beckoned to her husband, who went out, but immediately returned, leading in Melissa, after which he retired. 'Oh, Alonzo!' was all she could say, and burst into tears. Alonzo led her to a seat, gently pressed her hand, and mingled his tears with hers, but was unable to speak. Recovering at length, he begged her to moderate her grief. 'Where,' said he, 'is your fortitude and firmness, Melissa, which I have so often seen triumphing over affliction?' Her

extreme anguish prevented a reply. Deeply affected and alarmed at the storm of distress which raged in her bosom, he endeavored to console her, though consolation was a stranger to his own breast. 'Let us not, Melissa,' said he, 'increase our flood of affliction by a tide of useless sorrow. Perhaps more prosperous days are yet in reserve for us;—happiness may yet be ours.' 'Never, never,' she exclaimed. 'Oh, what will become of me !' 'Heaven cannot desert you,' said Alonzo; 'as well might it desert its angels. This thorny and gloomy path may lead to fair fields of light and verdure. Tempests are succeeded by calms; wars end in peace; the splendors of the brightest morning arise on the wings of the blackest midnight. Troubles will not always last. Life at most is short. Death comes to the relief of the virtuous wretched, and transports them to another and a better world, where sighing and sorrows cease, and the tempestuous passions of life are known no more.'

The rage of grief which had overwhelmed Melissa began now to subside, as the waves of the ocean gradually cease their tumultuous commotion, after the turbulent winds are laid asleep. Deep sobs and long drawn sighs succeeded to a suffocation of tears. The irritation of her feelings had caused a more than usual glow upon her cheek, which faded away as she became composed, until a livid paleness spread itself over her features. Alonzo feared that the delicacy of her constitution would fall a sacrifice to the sorrow which preyed upon her heart, if not speedily alleviated; But alas! where were the means of alleviation ?

She informed him that her father had that evening ordered her to become the wife of Beauman. He told her that her disobedience was no longer to

be borne.—‘No longer,’ said he, ‘will I tamper with your perverseness; you are determined to be poor, wretched and contemptible. I will compel you to be rich happy and respected. You suffer the Jack-with-a-lantern fancy to lead you into swamps and quagmires, when, did you but follow the fair light of reason, it would conduct you to honor and real felicity. There are happiness and misery at your choice.

‘Marry Beauman and you will roll in your coach, flaunt in your silks; your furniture and your equipage are splendid, your associates are of the first character, and your father rejoices in your prosperity.

‘Marry Alonzo, you sink into obscurity, are condemned to drudgery, poorly fed, worse clothed, and your relations and acquaintances shun and despise you. The comparison I have here drawn between Beauman and Alonzo is a correct one; for even the wardrobe of the former is of more value than the whole fortune of the latter.

‘I give you now two days to consider of the matter; at the end of that time I shall expect your decision, and hope you will decide discreetly. But remember that you become the wife of Beauman, or you are no longer acknowledged as my daughter.’

‘Thus,’ said Melissa, ‘did my father pronounce his determination, which shook my frame, and chilled with horror every nerve of my heart, and immediately left me.

‘My aunt added her taunts to his severities, and Beauman interfered with his ill-timed consolation. My mother and Edgar ardently strove to allay the fever of my soul, and mitigate my distress. But the stroke was almost too severe for my nature. Habituated only to the smiles of my father, how could a

support his frowns?—Accustomed to receive his blessings alone, how could I endure his sudden malediction?’

Description would fail in painting the sensations of Alonzo’s bosom, at this recital of woe. But he endeavored to mitigate her sorrows by the consolation of more cheering prospects and happier hours.

Vincent and his lady now came into the room. They strenuously urged the propriety and the necessity of Alonzo and Melissa’s entering into the bands of wedlock immediately. ‘The measure would be hazardous,’ remarked Melissa. ‘My circumstances’—said Alonzo. ‘Not on that account,’ interrupted Melissa, ‘but my father’s displeasure ——’ ‘Will be the same whether you marry Alonzo or refuse to marry Beauman,’ replied Vincent. Her resolution appeared to be staggered.

‘Come here, Melissa, to-morrow evening,’ said Mrs. Vincent, ‘mean time you will consider the matter, and then determine.’ To this Melissa assented, and prepared to return home.

Alonzo walked with her to the gate which opened into the yard surrounding her father’s house. It was dangerous for him to go farther. Should he be discovered with Melissa, even by a domestic of the family, it must increase the persecutions against her. They parted. Alonzo stood at the gate, gazing anxiously after Melissa as she walked up the long winding avenue, bordered with the odor flowing lilac, and lofty elm, her white robes now invisible, now dimly seen as she turned the angles of the walk, until they were totally obscured, mingling with the gloom and darkness of the night. ‘Thus,’ said Alonzo, ‘thus fades the angel of peace from the visionary eyes of the war-worn soldier, when it ascends in the dusky clouds of early morning, while

he slumbers on the field of recent battle.'—With mournful forebodings he returned to the house of Vincent. He arose after a sleepless night, and walked into an adjoining field. He stood leaning in deep contemplation against a tree when he heard quick footsteps behind him. He turned round and saw Edgar approaching: in a moment they were in each other's arms, and mingling tears. They returned to Vincent's and conversed largely on present affairs. 'I have discoursed with my father on the subject,' said Edgar. 'I have urged him with every possible argument to relinquish his determination: I fear, however, he is inflexible.'

'To assuage the tempest of grief which rent Melissa's bosom was my next object, and in this I trust I have not been unsuccessful. You will see her this evening, and will find her more calm and resigned. You, Alonzo, must ever exert your fortitude. The ways of heaven are inscrutable, but they are right.'

'We must acquiesce in its dealings. We cannot alter its decrees. Resignation to its will, whether merciful or afflictive, is one of those eminent virtues which adorn the good man's character, and ever find a brilliant reward in the regions of unsullied splendor, far beyond trouble and the tomb.'

Edgar told Alonzo that circumstances compelled him that day to depart for the army. 'I would advise you,' said he, 'to remain here till your affair comes to some final issue. It must, I think, ere long, be terminated. Perhaps you and my sister may yet be happy.'

Alonzo feelingly expressed his gratitude to Edgar. He found in him that disinterested friendship, which his early youth had experienced. Edgar, the same day, departed for the army.

In the afternoon, Alonzo received a note from Melissa's father, requesting his immediate attendance. Surprised at the incident, he repaired there immediately. The servant introduced him into a room where Melissa's father and aunt were sitting. —'Hearing you were in the neighborhood,' said her father, 'I have sent for you to make a proposition, which, after what has taken place, I think you cannot hesitate to comply with. The occurrence of previous circumstances may lead you to suppose that my daughter is under obligations to you, which may render it improper for her to form marriage connexions with any other. Whatever embarrassments your addresses to her may have produced, it is in your power to remove them. You cannot wish to involve Melissa in your present penurious condition, unless you wish to make her wretched. It therefore only remains for you to give me a writing, voluntarily resigning all pretensions to the hand of my daughter; and if you wish her to be happy, honorable and respected in this life, this I say, you will not hesitate to do.'

A considerable pause ensued. Alonzo at length replied, 'I cannot perceive any particular advantage that can accrue from such a measure. It will neither add nor diminish the power you possess to command obedience to your will, if you are determined to command it, either from your daughter or your servant.'——

'There, brother,' bawled the old maid, half speaking through her nose, which was well charged with rappee, 'did't I tell you so? I knew the fellow would not come to terms, no more than will you refractory daughter. This love fairly bewitches such foolish, crack-brained youngsters. But say, Mr. ——, what's your name,' addressing herself to

Alonzo, 'will love heat the oven? will love boil the pot? will love clothe the back? will love—'

'You will not,' interrupted Melissa's father, speaking to Alonzo, 'it seems consent to my proposition? I have then one demand to make, which of right you cannot deny. Promise me that you will never see my daughter again, unless by my permission.'

'At the present moment, I shall promise you nothing,' replied Alonzo, with some warmth.

'There, again,' said the old maid, 'just so Melissa told you this morning, when you requested her to see him no more. The fellow has fairly betwattled her. I wish I had him to deal with. Things was'nt so when I was a girl; I kept the rogues at a distance. I'll warrant you. I always told you brother what would come of your indulgence to your daughter. I should not wonder if you should soon find the girl had eloped, and your desk robbed in the bargain'

Alonzo hastily arose: 'I suppose, said he, my presence can be dispensed with.'

'Well, young man,' said Melissa's father, 'since you will not comply with any overtures I make; since you will not accede to any terms I propose, remember, sir, I now warn you to break off all communication and correspondence with my daughter, and to relinquish all expectations concerning her. I shall never consent to marry my daughter to a beggar.'

'Beggar!' involuntarily exclaimed Alonzo and his eyes flashed with resentment.—But he recollected that it was the father of Melissa who had thus insulted him, and he suppressed his anger. He rushed out of the house, and returned to Vincent's.



He had neither heard nor seen any thing of Melissa or Beauman.

Night came on, and he ardently and impatiently expected Melissa. He anticipated the consolation her presence would bestow. Edgar had told him she was more composed. He doubted whether it were proper to excite anew her distress by relating his interview with her father, unless she was apprised of it. The evening passed on, but Melissa came not. Alonzo grew restless and uneasy. He looked out, then at his watch. Vincent and his lady assured him that she would soon be there. He paced the room. Still he became more impatient, he walked out on the way where she was expected to come. Sometimes he advanced hastily; at others he moved slowly; then stood motionless, listening in breathless silence, momentarily expecting to discover her white form approaching through the gloom, or to hear the sound of her footsteps advancing amidst the darkness. Shapeless objects, either real or imaginary, frequently crossed his sight, but like the unreal phantoms of night, they suddenly passed away, and were seen no more. At length he perceived a dusky white form advancing in the distant dim obscurity. It drew near; his heart beat in quick succession; his fond hopes told him it was Melissa. The object came up and hastily passed him, with a 'good night sir.'

It was a stranger in a white surtout. Alonzo hesitated whether to advance or to return. It was possible, though not probable, that Melissa might have come some other way. He hastened back to Vincent's—she had not arrived. 'Something extraordinary,' said Mrs. Vincent 'has prevented her coming. Perhaps she is ill.' Alonzo shuddered at the suggestion. He looked at his watch; it was half



past eleven o'clock. Again he hastily sallied out, and took the road to her father's.

The night was exceedingly dark, and illuminated only by the feeble glimmering of the twinkling stars. When he came within sight of the house, and as he drew near no lights were visible—all was still and silent. He entered the yard, walked up the avenue, and approached the door. The familiar watchdog, which lay near the threshold, fawned upon him, joyfully whining and wagging his tail. 'Thou still knowest me, Carlow,' said Alonzo, 'thou hast known me in better days; I am now poor and wretched, but thy friendship is the same.' A solemn stillness prevailed all around, interrupted only by the discordance of the nightly insects, and the hooting of the moping owl from the neighboring forest.—The dwelling was shrouded in darkness. In Melissa's room no gleam of light appeared. 'They are all buried in sleep,' said Alonzo deeply sighing, 'and I have only to return in disappointment.'

He turned and walked towards the street: casting his eyes back, the blaze of a candle caught his sight. It passed rapidly along through the lower rooms, now gleaming, now intercepted, as the walls or the windows intervened, and suddenly disappeared. Alonzo gazed earnestly a few moments and hastily returned back. No noise was to be heard, no new objects were discernable. He clambered over the garden wall, and went around to the back side of the house. Here all was solemn and silent as in front. Immediately a faint light appeared through one of the chamber windows; it grew brighter; a candle entered the chamber; the sash was flung up, and Melissa seated herself at the window.

The weather was sultry, she held a fan in her hand; her countenance, though stamped with deep

dejection, was marked with serenity, but pale as the drooping lilly of the valley. Alonzo placed himself directly under the window, and in a low voice called her by name. She started wildly, looked out and faintly cried, 'Who's there?' He answered, 'Alonzo.' 'Good heavens,' she exclaimed, 'is it you, Alonzo? I was disappointed in meeting you at Vincent's this evening; my father will not suffer me to go out without attendants. I am now constantly watched and guarded.'

'Watched and guarded!' replied Alonzo; 'At the risk of my life I will deliver you from the tyranny with which you are oppressed.'

'Be calm, Alonzo,' said she, 'I think it will not last long. Beauman will soon depart, after which there will undoubtedly be some alteration. Desire Mrs. Vincent to come here to-morrow; I believe they will let me see her. I can, from time to time inform you of passing events, so that you may know what changes take place. I am placed under the care of my aunt, who suffers me not to step out of her sight. We pass the night in an adjoining chamber, from whence, after she had fallen asleep, I stole out, and went down with a design of walking in the garden, but found the doors all locked and the keys taken out. I returned and raised this window for fresh air. Hark!' said she, 'my aunt calls me. she has waked and misses me. I must fly to her chamber. You shall hear more from me to-morrow by Mrs. Vincent, Alonzo.' So saying she let down the window sash and retired.

Alonzo withdrew slowly from the place, and re-passed the way he came. As he jumped back over the garden wall, he found a man standing at its foot, very near him: After a moment's scrutiny he perceived it to be Beauman. 'What, my chevalier,

said he to Alonzo, 'such an adept in the amorous science already! hast thou then eluded the watchful eyes of Argus, and the vigilance of the dragon?'

'Unfeeling and impertinent intruder?' retorted Alonzo, seizing hold of him; 'is it not enough that an innocent daughter must endure a merciless parent's persecuting hand, but must thou add to her misery by thy disgusting interference!'

'Quit thy hold, Tarquin,' said Beauman. 'Art thou determined, after storming the fortress, to murder the garrison?'

'Go,' said Alonzo, quitting him; 'go, sir, you are unworthy of my anger. Pursue thy groveling schemes. Strive to force to your arms a lady who abhors you, and were it not on one account, must ever continue to hate and despise you.'

'Alonzo,' replied Beauman, 'I perceive thou knowest me not. You and I were rivals in our pursuit—the hand of Melissa. Whether from freak or fortune, the preference was given to you and I retired in silence. From coincidence of circumstances, her father has now been induced to give the preference to me. My belief was that Melissa would comply with her father's will, especially after her prospects of connecting with you were cut off by the events which ruined your fortune. You, Alonzo, have yet I find, to learn the character of women. It has been my particular study. Melissa, now ardently impassioned by first impressions, irritated by recent disappointment, her passions delicate and vivid, her affections animated and unmixed, it would be strange, if she could suddenly relinquish primitive attachments founded on such premises, without a struggle. But remove her from your presence one year, with only distant and uncertain prospect of seeing you again admit me as the substitute in

your absence, and she accepts my hand, as freely as she would now receive yours. I had no design—it was never my wish to marry her without her consent. That I believe I shall yet obtain. Under existing circumstances, it is impossible but you must be separated for some considerable time. Then when cool deliberation succeeds to the wild vagaries, the electric fire of frolic fancy, she will discover the dangerous precipice, the deadly abyss to which her present conduct and inclinations lead. She will see that the blandishments, without the possession of life will fade and die. She will discriminate between the shreds and trappings of taste. She will prefer indifference and splendor to love and a cottage.

‘At present I relinquish all further pursuit; to-morrow I return to New-London. When Melissa from calm deliberation and the advice of friends, shall freely consent to yield me her hand, I shall return to receive it. I came from my lodgings this evening to declare these intentions to her father: but it being later than I was aware of, the family had gone to rest. I was about to return, when I saw a light from a chamber window, which soon withdrew. I stood a moment by the garden wall, when you approached and discovered me.’ So saying, he bade Alonzo good night, and walked hastily away. ‘I find he knows not the character of Melissa,’ said Alonzo, and returned to Vincent’s.

The next day Alonzo told the Vincents of all that had passed, and it was agreed that Mrs. Vincent should visit at Melissa’s father’s that afternoon. She went at an early hour. Alonzo’s feelings were on the rack until she returned, which happened much sooner than was expected; when she gave him and Vincent the following information:

‘When I arrived there, said she, I found Melissa’s father and mother alone, her mother was in tears, which she endeavored to conceal. Her father soon withdrew. After some conversation I enquired for Melissa. The old lady burst into tears, and informed me that this morning Melissa’s aunt had invited her to ride out with her. A carriage was provided, which after a large trunk had been placed therein drove off with Melissa and her aunt; that Melissa’s father had just been informing her that he had sent their daughter to a distant part of the country, where she was to reside with a friend until Alonzo should depart from the neighborhood. The reason of this sudden resolution was his being informed by Beauman, that notwithstanding his precaution, Melissa and Alonzo had an interview the last evening. Where she was sent to the old lady could not tell, but she was convinced that Melissa was not apprised of the design when she consented to go. Her aunt had heretofore been living with the relatives of the family in various parts of the state.’

Alonzo listened to Mrs. Vincent’s relation with inexpressible agitation. He sat silent a few moments; then suddenly starting up, ‘I will find her if she be on the earth!’ said he, and in spite of Vincent’s attempts to prevent him, rushed out of the house, flew to the road and was soon out of sight.

Melissa had not the most distant suspicion of the designs of her father and aunt. The latter informed her that she was going to take a morning ride, and invited Melissa to accompany her, to which she consented. She did not even perceive the trunk that was fastened on behind the carriage. They were attended by a single servant. They drove to a neighboring town, where Melissa had frequently

attended her father and mother to purchase articles of dress, &c. where they alighted at a friend's house, and lingered away the time until dinner; after which, they prepared as Melissa supposed, to return, but found, to her surprise, after they had entered the carriage, that her aunt had ordered the driver to proceed a different way. She asked her aunt if they were not going home. 'Not yet,' said she. Melissa grew uneasy; she knew that she was to see Mrs. Vincent that afternoon; she knew the disappointment which Alonzo must experience, if she was absent. She begged her aunt to return; as she expected the company of some ladies that afternoon. 'Then they must be disappointed, child,' said her aunt. Melissa knew it was in vain to remonstrate; she supposed her aunt was bent on visiting some of her acquaintance and she remained silent.

They arrived at another village, and alighted at an inn, where Melissa and her aunt tarried, while the servant was ordered out by the latter on some business unknown to Melissa. When they again got into the carriage she perceived several large packages and bundles, which had been deposited there since they left it. She enquired of her aunt what they contained. 'Articles for family use, child,' she replied, and ordered the driver to proceed.

They passed along winding and solitary paths, into a by-road which led through an unfrequented wood, that opened into a rocky part of the country bordering on the Sound. Here they stopped at the only house in view. It was a miserable hut, built of logs and boarded with slabs. They alighted from the carriage, and Melissa's aunt handed the driver a large bunch of keys, 'remember to do as I have told you,' said she, and he drove rapidly away

It was with some difficulty they got into the hut, as a meagre cow, with a long yoke on her neck, a board before her eyes, and a cross-piece on her horns, stood with her head in the door. On one side of her were four or five half starved, squeaking pigs, on the other a flock of gagging geese.

As they entered the door a woman who sat carding wool jumped up, 'La me,' cried she, 'here is Miss D —, welcome here again. How does madam do?' dropping a low curtesy. She was dressed in a linsey-woolsey short gown, a petticoat of the same, her hair hanging about her ears, and bare-foot. Three dirty ragged children were playing about the floor, and the furniture was of a piece with the building. 'Is my room in order,' enquired Melissa's aunt. 'It hasn't been touched since madam was here,' answered the woman, and immediately stalked away to a little back apartment, which Melissa and her aunt entered. It was small but neatly furnished, and contained a single bed. This appendage had been concealed from Melissa's view as it was the opposite side of the house from where she alighted. 'Where is John?' asked Melissa's aunt. 'My husband is in the garden,' replied the woman; 'I will call him,' and out she scampered. John soon appeared and exhibited an exact counterpart of his wife. 'What does madam please to want,' said he, bowing three or four times. 'I want you, John,' she answered, and immediately stepped into the other room, and gave some directions in a low voice, to him and his wife. 'La, me!' said the woman, 'madam aint a going to live in that doleful place?' Melissa could not understand her aunt's reply, but heard her give directions to 'first hang on the tea-kettle.' This done, while John and his wife went out, Melissa's aunt prepar-



ed tea in her own room. In about an hour John and his wife returned, and gave the same bunch of keys to Melissa's aunt, which she had given to the servant who dove the carriage.

Melissa was involved in inscrutable mystery respecting these extraordinary proceedings. She conjectured that they boded her no good, but she could not penetrate into her aunt's designs. She frequently looked out, hoping to see the carriage return, but was disappointed. When tea was made ready, she could neither eat nor drink. After her aunt had disposed of a dozen cups of tea, and an adequate proportion of biscuit, butter and dried beef, she directed Melissa to prepare to take walk. The sun was low; they proceeded through fields, in a foot path, over rough and uneven ways, directly toward the Sound. They walked about a mile, when they came to a large, oldfashioned, castle like building, surrounded by a high, thick wall, and almost totally concealed on all sides, from the sight, by irregular rows of large locusts and elm trees, dry prim\* hedges, and green shrubbery. The gate which opened into the yard, was made of strong hard wood, thickly crossed on the outside with iron bars, and filled with old iron spikes. Melissa's aunt unlocked the gate, and they entered the yard which was overgrown with rank grass and rushes; the avenue which led to the house was almost in the same condition. The house was of real Gothic architecture, built of rude stone with battlements.

\*The botanical name of this shrub is not recollected. There were formerly a great number of prim hedges in New-England and other parts of America. What is most remarkable is that they all died the year previous to the commencement of the American war.



The doors were constructed in the same manner as the gate at which they entered the yard. They unlocked the door, which creaked heavily on its hinges, and went in. They ascended a flight of stairs, wound through several dark and empty rooms, till they came to one which was handsomely furnished, with a fire burning on the hearth. Two beds were in the room, with tables and chairs, and other conveniences for house-keeping. 'Here we are safe,' said Melissa's aunt, 'as I have taken care to lock all the doors and gates after me; and here, Melissa, you are in the mansion of your ancestors. Your great grandfather, who came over from England, built this house in the earliest settlement of the country, and here he resided until his death. The reason why so high and thick a wall was built round it and the doors and gates so strongly fortified, was to secure it against the Indians, who frequently committed depredations on the early settlers. Your grandfather came in possession of this estate after his father's death: it fell to me by will; with the lands surrounding it. The house has sometimes been tenanted, at others not. It has now been vacant for a few years. The lands are rented yearly. John, the person from whose house we last came, is my overseer and tenant. I had a small room built adjoining that hut, where I generally reside for a week when I come to receive my rents. I have thought frequently of fitting up this place for my future residence, but circumstances have hitherto hindered me from carrying my scheme into effect, and now perhaps, it will never take place. 'Your perverseness, Melissa, in refusing to comply with the wishes of your friends, has induced us to adopt this method of bringing you here where you are to remain until Alonzo leaves your neighborhood at least.—

Notwithstanding you father's injunctions and my vigilance, you had a clandestine interview with him last night. So we were told by Beauman this morning, before he set off for New-London, who discovered him at your window. It therefore became necessary to remove you immediately. You will want for nothing. John is to supply us with whatever is needful. You will not be long here; Alonzo will soon be gone. You will think differently; return home, marry Beauman, and become a lady.'

'My God!' exclaimed Melissa, 'is it possible my father can be so cruel! Is he so unfeeling as to banish me from his house, and confine me within the walls of a prison, like a common malefactor?' She flung herself on the bed in a state little inferior to distraction. Her aunt told her is was all owing to her own obstinacy, and because she refused to be made happy—and went to preparing supper.

Melissa heard none of her aunt's observations; she lay in stupifying agony, insensible to all that passed. When supper was ready her aunt endeavored to arouse her. She started up, stared around her with a wild agonizing countenance, but spoke not a word. Her aunt became alarmed; she applied stimulants to her temples and forehead, and persuaded her to take some cordials. She remained seemingly insensible through the night: just at morning she fell into a slumber, interrupted by incoherent moanings, convulsive startings, long drawn sighs, intermitting sobs, and by frequent, sudden and restless turnings, from side to side. At length she appeared to be in a calm and quiet sleep for about an hour. About sunrise she awoke—her aunt set by her bedside. She gazed languidly about the room, and burst into tears. She wept a long time; her aunt strove to console her, for she truly began to

tremble, lest Melissa's distress should produce her immediate dissolution. Towards night however she became more calm and resigned; but a slight fever succeeded, which kept her confined for several days, after which she slowly recovered.

John came frequently to the house to receive the commands of Melissa's aunt, and brought such things as they wanted. Her aunt also sometimes went home with him, leaving the keys of the house with Melissa, but locking the gate and taking the key of that with her. When Melissa was so far recovered as to walk out, she found that the house was situated on an eminence, about one hundred yards from the Sound. The yard was large and extensive. Within the enclosure was a spacious garden, now overrun with brambles and weeds. A few medicinal and odoriferous herbs were scattered here and there, and a few solitary flowers overtopped the tangling briars below; but there was plenty of fruit on the shrubbery and trees. The outbuildings were generally in a ruinous condition. The cemetery was the most perfect, as it was built of hewn stone and marble, and had best withstood the ravages of time. The rooms in the house were mostly empty and decaying, the main building was firm and strong, as was also the extended wall which enclosed the whole. She found that although her aunt, when they first arrived, had led her through several upper rooms to the chamber they inhabited, yet there was from thence a direct passage to the hall.

The prospect was not disagreeable. West, all was wilderness, from which a brook wound along a little distance from the garden wall. North, were the uneven grounds which she had crossed when she came there, bounded by distant groves and hills

East, beautiful meadows and fields, arrayed in flowery green, sloped to salt marshes or sandy banks of the Sound, or ended in the long white beaches which extended far into the sea. South was the Sound of Long Island.

Melissa passed much time in tracing the ruins of this antiquated place, in viewing the white sails as they passed up and down the Sound, and in listening to the songs of the thousand various birds which frequented the garden and the forest. She could have been contented here to have buried her afflictions, and forever to retire from the world, could Alonzo but have resided within those walls. 'What will he think has become of me,' she would say, while the disconsolate tear glittered in her eye. Her aunt had frequently urged her to yield to her father's injunctions, regain her liberty and marry Beauman; and she every day became more solicitous and impertinent. A subject so hateful to Melissa sometimes provoked her to tears; at others her keen resentment. She therefore, when the weather was fair, passed much of her time in the garden and adjoining walks, wishing to be as much out of her aunt's company as possible.

One day John came there early in the morning, and Melissa's aunt went home with him. The day passed away, but she did not return. Melissa sat up until a late hour of the night, expecting her; she went to the gate, and found it was fast locked, returned, locked and bolted the doors of the house, went to bed and slept as soundly as she had done since her residence in the old mansion, 'I have at least,' she said, 'escaped the disgusting curtain lecture about marrying Beauman.'

The next day her aunt returned. 'I was quite concerned about you, child,' said she; 'how did

you sleep?' 'Never better,' she answered, 'since I have been here.' 'I had forgotten,' said her aunt, that my rents become due this week. I was detained until late, by some of my tenants; John was out and I dare not return in the night alone. I must go back to-day. It will take me a week to settle my business. If I am obliged to stay out again I will send one of John's daughters to sleep with you.' 'You need not give yourself that trouble,' replied Melissa; 'I am under no apprehension of staying here alone; nothing can get into or out of these premises——'

'Well, thou hast wonderful courage, child,' said her aunt, 'but I shall be as frequently here as possible, and as soon as my business is settled, I shall be absent no more.' So saying she bade Melissa good morning, and set off for her residence at the dwelling of John.

She did not return in two days. The second night of her absence, Melissa was sitting in her chamber reading, when she heard a noise of several people trampling in the yard below. She arose, cautiously raised the window, and looked out. It was extremely dark: she thought she might have been discovered.

Her aunt came the next day, and told her she was obliged to go into the country to collect some debts of those to whom she had rented some lands: she should be gone a few days, and as soon as she returned should come there. 'The keys of the house' said she, 'I shall leave with you. The gate I shall lock, and leave the key with John, who will come here as often as necessary, to assist you and see if you want any thing.' She then went off leaving Melissa not dissatisfied with the prospect of her absence.

Melissa amused herself in evenings by reading in the few books her aunt had brought there, and in the day, in walking around the yard and garden, or in traversing the rooms of the antique building. In some were the remains of ancient furniture, others were entirely empty. Cobwebs and mouldering walls were the principal ornaments left.

One evening as she was about retiring to rest, she thought she heard the same trampling noise in the yard as on a former occasion. She stepped softly to the window, suddenly raised it and held out the candle. She listened and gazed with anxious solicitude, but discovered nothing more. All was silent; she shut the window, and in a short time went to bed.

Some time in the night she was suddenly awakened by a sharp sound, apparently near her. She started in a trembling panic, but endeavored to compose herself with the idea, that something had fallen from the shelves. As she lay musing upon the incident, she heard noises in the rooms below, succeeded by an irregular and confused number of voices, and presently after, footsteps ascending the stairs which led to her chamber. She trembled; a cold chilly sweat run down her face. Directly the doors below opened and shut with a quick and violent motion. And soon after she was convinced that she distinctly heard a whispering in her room. She raised herself up in the bed and cast inquisitive eyes towards her chamber door. All was darkness—no new object was visible—no sound was heard, and she again lay down.

Her mind was too much agitated and alarmed to sleep. She had evidently heard sounds, footsteps and voices in the house, and whisperings which appeared to be in her room. The yard gate was lock-

ed, of which John had the key. She was confident that no person could ascend or get over the wall of the enclosure. But if that were practicable, how was it possible that any human being could enter the house? She had the key of every door, and they were all fast locked, and yet she had heard them furiously open and shut. A thought darted into her mind,—was it not a plan which her aunt had contrived in order to frighten her to a compliance with her wishes? But then how could she enter the house without keys?—This might be done with the use of a false key. But from whence did the whisperings proceed, which appeared close to her bedside? Possibly it might be conveyed through the key hole of her chamber door. These thoughts tended in some degree to allay her fears; they were possibilities at least, however improbable.

As she lay thus musing, a hand cold as the icy fingers of death, grasped her arm which lay outside of the bed clothes. She screamed convulsively, and sprang up in the bed. Nothing was to be seen—no noise was heard. She had not time to reflect. She flew out of the bed, ran to the fire and lighted a candle. Her heart beat rapidly. She cast timid glances around the room, cautiously searching every corner, and examining the door. All things were in the same state she had left them when she went to bed. Her door was locked in the same manner; no visible being was in the room except herself; how then could she account for these events? Was it not probable that she was right in her first conjectures respecting their being the works of her aunt and effected by her agents and instrumentality? All were possible except the cold hand which had grasped her arm. Might not this be the effect of a terrified and heated imagination? But could her room be



unlocked, persons enter, approach her bed, depart and re-lock the door while she was awake, without her hearing them?

She knew she could not go to sleep, and she determined not to go to bed again that night. She took up a book, but her spirits had been too much disordered by the past scenes to permit her to read. She looked out of the window. The moon had arisen and cast a pale lustre over the landscape. She recollected the opening and shutting of the door—perhaps they were still open. The thought was alarming.—She opened her chamber door, and with the candle in her hand, cautiously descended the stairs, casting an inquisitive eye in every direction, and stopping frequently to listen. She advanced to the door—it was locked. She examined the others; they were all in the same situation. She turned to go up stairs, when a loud whisper echoed through the hall expressing ‘*away, away!*’ She flew like lightning to her chamber, re-locked the door and flung herself almost breathless, into a chair.

As soon as her scattered senses were collected, she concluded that whatever had been in the house was there still. She resolved to go out no more until day, which soon began to discolor the east with a fainter blue; then purple streaks, intermingled with a dusky whiteness, ascended in pyramidal columns the zenith; these fading slowly away, the eastern horizon became fringed with the golden spangles of early morn. A spot of ineffable brightness succeeded, and immediately the sun burst over the verge of creation, deluging the world in a flood of unbounded light and glory.

As soon as the morning had a little advanced, Melissa ventured out. She proceeded with hesitating steps, carefully scrutinizing every object which met



her sight. She examined every door ; they were all fast. She critically searched every room, closet, &c. above and below. She then took a light and descended into the cellar—here her inquisition was the same. Thus did she thoroughly and strictly examine and search every part of the house from the garret to the cellar, but could find nothing altered, changed, or removed; no outlet, no signs of there having been any being in the house the evening before, except herself.

She then unlocked the outer door and proceeded to the gate, which she found locked as usual. She next examined the yard, the garden, and all the out-houses.

Nothing could be discovered of any person having been recently there. She next walked around by the wall, the whole circle of the enclosure. She was convinced that the unusual height of the wall rendered it impossible for any one to get over it. It was constructed of several tier of hewed timbers and both sides of it were as smooth as glass. On the top long spikes were thickly driven in, sharpened at both ends. It was surrounded on the outside by a deep wide moat, which was nearly filled with water. Over this moat was a draw-bridge, on the road leading to the gate, which was drawn up, and John had the key.

The events of the last night therefore remained inscrutable. It must be that her aunt was the agent who had managed this extraordinary machinery.

She found John at the house when she returned. ‘Does madam want any thing to-day?’ asked he. ‘Has my aunt returned,’ enquired Melissa. ‘Not yet,’ he replied: ‘How long has she been gone?’ she asked. ‘Four days,’ replied John, after counting his fingers, ‘and she will not be back under four

or five more.' 'Has the key of the gate been constantly in your possession?' asked she. 'The key of the gate and draw-bridge,' he replied 'have not been out of my possession for a moment since your aunt has been gone.' 'Has any person been to enquire for me or my aunt,' she enquired, 'since I have been here?' 'No, madam,' said he, 'not a single person.' Melissa knew not what to think; she could not give up the idea of false keys—perhaps her aunt had returned to her father's. Perhaps the draw-bridge had been let down, the gate opened and the house entered by false keys. He father would as soon do this as confine her in this solitary place; and he would go all lengths to induce her, either by terror, persuasion or threats, to relinquish Alonzo and marry Beauman.

A thought impressed her mind which gave her some consolation. It was possible to secure the premises so that no person could enter even by the aid of false keys. She asked John if he would assist her that day. 'In any thing you wish, madam,' he replied. She then directed him to go to work. Staples and iron bars were found in different parts of the building, with which he secured the doors and windows, so that they could be opened only on the inside. The gate, which swung in, was secured in the same manner. She then asked John if he was willing to leave the key of the gate and draw-bridge with her. 'Perhaps I may as well,' said he; 'for if you bar the gate and let down the bridge, I cannot get in myself until you let me in.' John handed her the keys. 'When I come,' said he, 'I will halloo, and you must let me in.' This she promised to do and John departed.\*

\*Of the place where Melissa was confined, as

That night Melissa let down the bridge, locked and barred the gate, and the doors and windows of the house; she also went again over all parts of the building, strictly searching every place, though she was well convinced she should find nothing extraordinary. She then retired to her chamber, seated herself at the western window, and watched the slow declining sun, as it leisurely sunk behind the lofty groves. Pensive twilight spread her misty mantle over the landscape; the western horizon glowed with the spangles of evening. Deepening glooms advanced. The last beam of day faded from the view, and the world was enveloped in night. The owl hooted solemnly in the forest, and the whippoorwill sung cheerfully in the garden. Innumerable stars glittered in the firmament, intermingling their quivering lustre with the pale splendors of the milky way.

Melissa did not retire from the window until late; she then shut it and withdrew within the room. She determined not to go to bed that night. If she was to be visited by beings, material or immaterial, she chose not again to encounter them in darkness, or to be surprised when she was asleep. But why should she fear? She knew of none she had displeas-

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described in the foregoing pages, scarce a trace now remains. By the events of the revolution, the premises fell into other hands. The mansion, out-houses and walls were torn down, the cemetery levelled, the moat filled up; the locusts and elm trees were cut down, all obstructions were removed, and the yard and garden converted into a beautiful meadow. An elegant farm house is now erected on the place where John's hut then stood, and the neighborhood is thinly settled.

ed except her father, her aunt and Beauman. If by any of these, the late terrifying scenes had been wrought, she had now effectually precluded a recurrence thereof, for she was well convinced that no human being could now enter the enclosure without her permission. But if supernatural agents had been the actors, what had she to fear from them? The night passed away without any alarming circumstances, and when daylight appeared she flung herself upon the bed, and slept until morning was considerably advanced. She now felt convinced that her former conjectures were right; that it was her aunt, her father, or both, who had caused the alarming sounds she had heard, a repetition of which had only been prevented by the precautions she had taken.

When she awoke the horizon was overclouded, and it began to rain. It continued to rain until towards evening, when it cleared away. She went to the gate and found all things as she had left them: She returned, fastened the doors as usual, examined all parts of the house, and again went to her chamber.

She sat up until a late hour, when growing very drowsy, and convinced that she was safe and secure, she went to bed; leaving, however, candles burning in the room. As she for two nights had been deprived of her rest, she soon fell into a slumber.

She had not long been asleep, before she was suddenly aroused by the apparent report of a pistol, seemingly discharged close to her head. Awakened so instantaneously, her recollection, for a time, was confused and imperfect. She was only sensible of a strong, sulphurous scent: but she soon remembered that she had left two candles burning, and every object was now shrouded in darkness. This

alarmed her exceedingly. What could have become of the candles? They must have been blown out or taken away. What was the sound she had just heard?—What the sulphurous stench which had pervaded the room?—While she was thus musing in perplexity, a broad flash like lightning transiently illuminated the chamber, followed by a long, loud, and deep roar, which seemed to shake the building to its centre. It did not appear like thunder; the sound seemed to be in the room directly over her head. Perhaps, however, it was thunder.

Perhaps a preceding clap had struck near the building, broken the windows, put out the lights, and filled the house with electric effluvia. She listened for a repetition of the thunder—but a very different sound grated on her ear. A hollow, horrible groan echoed through her apartment, passing off in a faint dying murmur. It was evident that the groan proceeded from some person in the chamber. Melissa raised herself up in bed; a tall white form moved from the upper end of the room, glided slowly by her bed, and seemed to pass off near the foot. She then heard the doors below alternately open and shut, slapping furiously and in quick succession, followed by violent noises in the rooms below, like the falling of heavy bodies and the crash of furniture. Clamorous voices succeeded, among which she could distinguish boisterous menaces and threatenings, and the plaintive tones of expostulation. A momentary silence ensued when the cry of 'Murder! murder! murder!' echoed through the building, followed by the report of a pistol, and shortly after, the groans of a person apparently in the agonies of death, which grew fainter and fainter until it died away in a seemingly expiring gasp. A dead silence prevailed for a few minutes, to which a loud,

hoarse peal of ghastly laughter succeeded—then again all was still. But she soon heard heavy footsteps ascending the stairs to her chamber door. It was now she became terrified and alarmed beyond any former example. ‘Gracious heaven defend me,’ she exclaimed; what am I coming to!’ Knowing that every avenue to the enclosure was effectually secured; knowing that all the doors and windows of the house, as also that which opened into her chamber, were fast locked, strictly bolted and barred; and knowing that all the keys were in her possession, she could not entertain the least doubt but the noises she had heard were produced by supernatural beings, and she had reason to believe, of the most mischievous nature. She was now convinced that her father or her aunt could have no agency in the business. She even wished her aunt had returned. It must be exceedingly difficult to cross the moat, as the draw-bridge was up; it must be still more difficult to pass the wall of the enclosure; it was impossible for any human being to enter the house, and still more impossible to enter the chamber.

While she lay thus ruminating in extreme agitation, momentarily expecting to have her ears assailed with some terrific sound, a pale light dimly illuminated her chamber. It grew brighter. She raised herself up to look towards the door;—the first object which met her eye, was a most horrible form, standing at a little distance from her bedside. Its appearance was tall and robust, wrapped in a tattered white robe, spotted with blood. The hair of its head was matted with clotted gore. A deep wound appeared to have pierced its breast, from which fresh blood flowed down its garment. Its pale face was gashed and gory! its eyes fixed, glass-

ed and glaring;—its lips open, its teeth set, and in its hand was a bloody dagger.

Melissa uttering a shriek of terror, shrunk into the bed, and in an instant the room was involved in pitchy darkness. A freezing ague seized her limbs, and drops of chilling sweat stood upon her face. Immediately a horrid hoarse voice burst from amidst the gloom of her apartment, '*Begone! begone from this house!*' The bed on which she lay then seemed to be agitated, and directly she perceived some person crawling on its foot. Every consideration, except present safety was relinquished; instantly she sprang from the bed to the floor—with convulsed grasp, seized the candle, flew to the fire and lighted it. She gazed wildly around the room—no new object was visible. With timid step she approached the bed; she strictly searched all around and under it, but nothing strange could be found. A thought darted into her mind to leave the house immediately and fly to John's: this was easy, as the keys of the gate and draw-bridge were in her possession. She stopped not to reconsider her determination, but seizing the keys with the candle in her hand, she unlocked her chamber door, and proceeded cautiously down stairs, fearfully casting her eyes on each side, as she tremblingly advanced to the outer door. She hesitated a moment. To what perils was she about to expose herself, by thus venturing out at the dead of night, and proceeding such a distance alone? Her situation, she thought, could become no more hazardous, and she was about to unbar the door, when she heard a deep hollow sigh. She looked around, and saw stretched on one side of the hall, the same ghastly form which had so recently appeared standing at her bedside. The same haggard countenance, the same awful appearance of



murderous death. A faintness came upon her, she turned to flee to her chamber—the candle dropped from her trembling hand, and she was shrouded in impenetrable darkness. She groped to find the stairs: as she came near the foot, a black object, apparently in human shape, stood before her, with eyes which seemed to burn like coals of fire, and red flames issuing from its mouth. As she stood fixed a moment in inexpressible trepidation, a large ball of fire rolled along the hall, towards the door, and burst with an explosion which seemed to rock the building to its deepest foundation. Melissa closed her eyes and sunk senseless to the floor. She revived and got to her chamber, she hardly knew how; locked her door, lighted another candle, and after again searching the room, flung herself into a chair, in a state of mind which almost deprived her of reason.

Daylight soon appeared, and the cheerful sun darting its enlivening rays through the crevices and windows of the antique mansion, recovered her exhausted spirits, and dissipated in some degree, the errors which hovered about her mind. She endeavored to reason coolly on the events of the past night, but reason could not elucidate them. Not the least noise had been heard since she returned to her chamber: she therefore expected to discover no traits which might tend to a disclosure of these mysteries. She consoled herself only with a fixed determination to leave the desolate mansion. Should John come there that day, he might be prevailed on to permit her to remain at her aunt's apartment in his house till her aunt should return. If he should not come before sunset, she resolved to leave the mansion and proceed there.



She took some refreshments and went down stairs, she found the doors and windows all fast as she had left them. She then again searched every room in the house, both above and below and the cellar; but she discovered no appearance of there having been any person there. Not the smallest article was displaced; every thing appeared as it formerly had been. She then went to the gate; it was locked as usual and the draw bridge up. She again traversed the circuit of the wall, but found no alteration, or any place where it was possible the enclosure might be entered. Again she visited the outer buildings, and even entered the cemetery, but discovered not the least circumstance which could conduce to explain the surprising transactions of the preceding night. She however, returned to her room in a more composed frame of spirit, confident that she should not remain alone another night in that gloomy, desolate and dangerous solitude.

Towards evening Melissa took a walk around the enclosure. It was that season of the year when weary summer is lapsing into the arms of fallow autumn. The day had been warm and the light gales bore invigorating coolness on their wings as they tremulously agitated the foliage of the western forest, or fluttered among the branches of the trees surrounding the mansion: The green splendors of spring had began to fade into a yellow lustre, the flowery verdure of the field was changed to a russet hue. A robin chirped on a neighboring oak, a wren chattered beneath, swallows twittered around the decayed buildings, the ludicrous mocking bird sung sportively from the top of the highest elm and the surrounding groves rung with varying, less melody, while deep in the adjacent wilds the woodcock hammering on some dry and blasted

trees, filled the woods with reverberating echoes. The Sound was only ruffled by the lingering breezes, as they idly wandered over its surface. Long Island, now in possession of the British troops, was thinly enveloped in smoky vapor; scattered along its shores lay the numerous small craft and larger ships of the hostile fleet. A few skiffs were passing and repassing the Sound, and several American gunboats lay on a point which jutted out from the main land, far to the eastward. Numberless summer insects mingled their discordant strains amidst the weedy herbage. A heavy black cloud was rising in the northwest, which seemed to portend a shower, as the sonorous distant thunder was at long intervals distinctly heard.

Melissa walked around the yard, contemplating the varying beauties of the scene; the images of departing joys—the days when Alonzo had participated with her in admiring the splendors of rural prospects, raised in her bosom the sigh of deep regret. She entered the garden and traversed the alleys, now overgrown with weeds and tufted knot grass; the flower beds were choked with low running bramble and tangling five finger; tall, rank rushes, mulens and daises, had usurped the empire of the kitchen garden. The viny arbor was broken, and principally gone to decay; yet the ‘lonely wild rose’ blushed mournfully amidst the ruins. As she passed from the garden she involuntarily stopped at the cemetery: she paused in serious reflection:—‘Here’ said she, ‘in this house of gloom rests in undisturbed silence my honorable ancestors, once the active tenants of yonder mansion. Then throughout these solitary demesnes, the busy occurrences of life glided in cheerful circles. Then, these now moss clad alleys, and this wild weedy garden, were the resort of

the fashionable and the gay. Then evening music floated over the fields; while yonder halls and apartments shone in brilliant illumination. Now all is sad, solitary and dreary, the haunt of spirits and spectres of nameless terror. All that now remains of the head that formed and the hand that executed, and the bosom that relished this once happy scenery, is now, alas, only a heap of dust.'

She seated herself on a little hillock, under a weeping willow, which stood near the cemetery, and watched the rising shower, which ascended in gloomy pomp, half hidden behind the western groves, shrouding the low sun in black vapor, while coming thunders more nearly and more awfully rolled. The shrieking night-hawk\* soared high into the air, mingling with the lurid van of the approaching storm, which widening more rapidly advanced, until the heavens were arrayed in blackness.

The lightning broader and brighter flashes, hurling down its forked streaming bolts far in the wilderness, its flaming path followed by the vollying artillery of the skies. Now bending its long crinkling spires over the vallies, now glimmering along the summit of the hills. Convolving clouds poured smoky volumes through the expansion; a deep hollow, distant roar, announced the approach of 'summoned winds.' The whole forest bowed in awful grandeur, as from its dark bosom rushed the impetuous hurricane, twisting off or tearing up by the roots, the stoutest trees, whirling the heaviest branches through the air with irresistible fury. It dashed upon the sea, tossed it into irregular moun-

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\* Supposed to be the male whippoorwill; well known in the New-England states, and answering to the above peculiarity.

tains, or mingled its white foamy spray with the gloom of the turbid skies. Slantwise, the large heavy drops of rain began to descend. Melissa hastened to the mansion; as she reached the door, a very brilliant flash of lightning, accompanied by a tremendous explosion, alarmed her. A thunderbolt had entered a large elm tree within the enclosure, and with a horrible crash had shivered it from top to bottom. She unlocked the door and hurried to her chamber. Deep night now filled the atmosphere; the rain poured in torrents, the wind rocked the building, and bellowed in the adjacent groves: the sea raged and roared, fierce lightnings rent the heavens, alternately involving the world in the sheeted flame of its many colored fires; thunders rolled awfully around the firmament, or burst with horrid din, bounding and reverberating among the surrounding woods, hills and valleys. It seemed nothing less than the crash of worlds sounding through the universe.

Melissa walked her room, listening to the wild commotion of the elements. She feared that if the storm continued, she should be compelled to pass another night in the lone mansion: if so she resolved not to go to bed. She now suddenly recollected that in her haste to regain her chamber; she had forgotten to lock the outer door. The shock she had received when the lightning demolished the elm tree, was the cause of this neglect. She took the candle, ran hastily down, and fastened the door. As she was returning she heard footsteps, and imperfectly saw the glance of something coming out of an adjoining room into the hall. Supposing some ghastly object was approaching she averted her eyes and flew to the stairs. As she was ascending them, a voice exclaimed, 'Gracious heaven! Meli-

sa !' The voice agitated her frame with a confused sympathetic sensation. She turned, fixed her eyes upon the person who had spoken; unconnected ideas floated a moment in her imagination : 'Eternal powers!' she cried, 'it is Alonzo.'

Alonzo and Melissa were equally surprised at so unexpected a meeting. They could scarcely credit their own senses. How he had discovered her solitude—what led him to that lonely place—how he had got over the wall—were queries which first arose in her mind. He likewise could not conceive by what miracle he should find her in a remote desolate building, which he had supposed to be uninhabited. With rapture he took her trembling hand; tears of joy choaked their utterance. 'You are wet Alonzo,' said Melissa at length; 'we will go up to my chamber, I have a fire there, where you can dry your clothes.'—'Your chamber;' replied Alonzo; 'who then inhabits this house?' 'No one except myself,' she answered; 'I am here alone, Alonzo.' 'Alone!' he exclaimed—'here alone, Melissa! Good God! tell me how—why—by what means are you here alone?' 'Let us go up to my chamber,' she replied, 'and I will tell you all.'

He followed her to her apartment and seated himself by the fire. 'You want refreshment,' said Melissa—which was indeed the case, as he had been long without any, and was wet, hungry, and weary.

She immediately set about preparing tea, and soon had it ready, and a comfortable repast was spread for his entertainment. And now reader, if thou art a child of nature, if thy bosom is susceptible of refined sensibility, contemplate for a moment Melissa and Alonzo seated at the same table, a table prepared by her own hand, in a lonely mansion, separated from society, and no one to interrupt them.

After innumerable difficulties, troubles, and perplexities; after vexing embarrassments, and a cruel separation, they were once more together, and for some time every other consideration was lost. The violence of the storm had not abated. The lightning still blazed, the thunder bellowed, the wind roared, the sea raged, the rain poured mingled with heavy hail; Alonzo and Melissa heard but little of it. She told him all that had happened to her since they parted, except the strange noises and awful sights which had terrified her during her confinement in that solitary building: this she considered unnecessary and untimely, in her present situation.

Alonzo informed her, that as soon as he had learned the manner in which she had been sent away, he left the house of Vincent and went to her father's to see if he could not find out by some of the domestics what course her aunt had taken. None of them knew any thing about it. He did not put himself in the way of her father, as he was apprehensive of ill treatment thereby. He then went to several places among the relatives of the family where he had heretofore visited with Melissa, most of whom received him with a cautious coldness. At length he came to the house of Mr. Simpson, the gentleman to whose seat Alonzo was once driven by a shower, where he accidentally found Melissa on a visit, as mentioned before. Here he was admitted with the ardor of friendship. They had heard his story: Melissa had kept up a correspondence with one of the young ladies; they were therefore, informed of all except Melissa's removal from her father's house: of this they knew nothing until told thereof by Alonzo.

'I am surprised at the conduct of my kinsman,' said Mr. Simpson; 'for though his determinations are,

like the laws of the Medes and Persians, unalterable, yet I have ever believed that the welfare of his children lay nearest his heart. In the present instance he is certainly pursuing a mistaken policy. I will go and see him.' He then ordered his horse, desiring Alonzo to remain until he returned.

Alonzo was treated with the most friendly politeness by the family, he found that they were deeply interested in his affairs and in the welfare of Melissa. At evening Mr. Simpson returned.—'It is in vain,' said he, 'to reason with my kinsman, he is determined that his daughter shall marry your rival. He will not even inform me to what place he has sent Melissa. Her aunt, however, is with her, and they must be at the residence of some of the family relatives—I will despatch my son William among our connexions, to see if he can find her out.'

The next morning William departed, and was gone two days; but could not obtain the least intelligence either of Melissa or her aunt, although he had been the rounds among the relations of the family.

'There is some mystery in this affair,' said Mr. Simpson. 'I am very little acquainted with Melissa's aunt. I have understood that she draws a decent support from her patrimonial resources, which it is said are pretty large, and that she resides alternately with her different relatives. I have understood also, that my kinsman expects her fortune to come into his family, in case she never marries, which in all probability, she now will not, and that she, in consequence, holds considerable influence over him. It is not possible but that Melissa is yet concealed at some place of her aunt's residence, and that the family are in the secret. I think it cannot be long before they will disclose themselves: You,



Alonzo, are welcome to make my house your home and if Melissa can be found she shall be treated as my daughter.'

Alonzo thanked him for his friendship and fatherly kindness. 'I must continue,' said he, 'my researches for Melissa; the result you shall know.'

He then departed, and travelled through the neighboring villages and adjoining neighborhoods, making at almost every house, such enquiries as he considered necessary on the occasion. He at length arrived at the inn in the last little village where Melissa and her aunt had stopped the day they came to the mansion. Here the innkeeper informed him that two ladies, answering his description, had been at his house; he named the time, which was the day in which Melissa with her aunt left her father's house. The innkeeper told him that they purchased some articles in the village, and drove off to the south. Alonzo then traversed the country adjoining the Sound, far to the westward, and was returning eastward, when he was overtaken by the shower. No house being within sight, he betook himself to the forest for shelter. From a little hilly glade in the wilderness, he discovered the lonely mansion, which from its appearance, he very naturally supposed to be uninhabited. The tempest soon becoming severe, he thought he would endeavor to reach the house.

When he arrived at the moat he found it impossible to cross it, or ascend the wall;—and he stood in momentary jeopardy of his life, from the falling timber; some of which was broken and torn up by the tornado, and some splintered by the fiery bolts of heaven. At length a large tree, which stood near him, on the verge of the moat, or rather in that place, was hurled from its foundation, and fell, with



a hideous crash, across the moat, its top lodging on the wall. He scrambled up on the trunk, and made his way on the wall. By the incessant glare of lightning he was able to see distinctly. The top of the tree was partly broken by the force of its fall, and hung down the other side of the wall. By these branches, he let himself down into the yard, proceeded to the house, found the door open which Melissa had left in her fright, and entered into one of the rooms, where he proposed to stay until at least the shower was over, still supposing the house unoccupied, until the noise of locking the door, and the light of the candle, drew him from the room, when to his infinite surprise, he discovered Melissa, as before related.

Melissa listened to Alonzo with varied emotion. The fixed obduracy of her father, the generous conduct of the Simpsons, the constancy of Alonzo, filled her heart with inexpressible sensations. She foresaw that her sufferings were not shortly to end, she knew not when her sorrows were to close.

Alonzo was shocked at the alteration which appeared in the features of Melissa. The rose had faded from her cheek, except when it was transiently suffused with a hectic flush. A livid paleness sat upon her countenance, and her fine form was rapidly wasting. It was easy to be foreseen that the grief which preyed upon her heart would soon destroy her, unless speedily allayed.

The storm had now passed into the regions of the east; the wind and rain had ceased, the lightning more unfrequently flashed and the thunder rolled at a distance. The hours passed hastily;—day would soon appear. Hitherto they had been absorbed in the present moment; it was time to think of the future. After the troubles they had experi-

enced; after so fortunate a meeting, they could not endure the idea of another and immediate separation. And yet immediately separated they must be. It would not be safe for Alonzo to stay even until the rising sun, unless he was concealed: and of what use could it be for him to remain there in concealment.

In this dilemma there was but one expedient. 'Suffer me,' said Alonzo to Melissa, 'to remove you from this solitary confinement. Your health is impaired. To you, your father is no more a father; he has steeled his bosom to paternal affection; he has banished you from his house, placed you under the tyranny of others, and confined you in a lonely, desolate dwelling, far from the sweets of society, and this only because you cannot heedlessly renounce a most solemn contract, formed under his eye, and sanctioned by his immediate consent and approbation. Pardon me; Melissa, I would not censure your father; but permit me to say that after such treatment, you are absolved from implicit obedience to his rigorous, cruel and stern commands. It will therefore be considered a duty you owe to your preservation, if you suffer me to remove you from the tyrannical severity with which you are oppressed.'

Melissa sighed, wiped a tear which fell from her eye. 'Unqualified obedience to my parents,' said she, 'I have ever considered one of the first duties, and have religiously practised thereon—but where Alonzo, would you remove me?' 'To any place you shall appoint,' he answered? 'I have no where to go,' she replied.

'If you will allow me to name the place,' said he, 'I will mention Mr. Simpson's. He will espouse your cause and be a father to you, and if conciliation is possible, will reconcile you to your father.'

This can be done without my being known to have any agency in the business. It can seem as if Mr. Simpson had found you out. He will go any just lengths to serve us. It was his desire, if you could be found, to have you brought to his house. There you can remain either in secret or openly, as you shall choose. Be governed by me in this, Melissa, and in all things I will obey you thereafter. I will then submit to the future events of fate; but I cannot Melissa—I cannot leave you in this doleful place.’

Melissa arose and walked the room in extreme agitation. What could she do? She had, indeed, determined to leave the house, for reasons which Alonzo knew nothing of. To continue there under existing circumstances would be impossible, long to exist.—She therefore came to a determination—‘I will go,’ she said, ‘to Mr. Simpson’s.’

It was then agreed that Alonzo should proceed to Vincent’s, interest them in the plan, procure a carriage and return at eleven o’clock the next night. Melissa was to have the draw bridge down, and the gate open. If John should come to the house the succeeding day, she would persuade him to let her still keep the keys. But it was possible her aunt might return. This would render the execution of the scheme more hazardous and difficult. A signal was therefore agreed upon; if her aunt should be there, a candle was to be placed at the window fronting the gate, in the room above; if not, it was to be placed against a similar window in a room below. In the first case Alonzo was to rap loudly at the door. Melissa was to run down on pretence of seeing who was there, fly with Alonzo to the carriage, and leave her aunt to scrape acquaintance with the ghosts and goblins of the old mansion. For

even if her aunt should return, which was extremely doubtful, she thought she could contrive to let down the bridge and unlock the gate in the evening without her knowledge. At any rate she was determined not to let the keys go out of her hands, unless they were forced from her, until she had escaped from that horrid and dreary place.

Daylight began to break from the east, and Alonzo prepared to depart. Melissa accompanied him to the gate and the bridge, which was let down: he passed over and slowly withdrew, both frequently turning to look back. When she came to the gate she stopped,—Alonzo stopped also. She waved a white handkerchief she had in her hand, and Alonzo bowed in answer to the sign. She then leisurely entered and slowly shut the gate. Alonzo could not forbear climbing up into a tree to catch another glimpse of her as she passed up the avenue. With lingering step he saw her move along, soon receding from his view in the gray twilight of misty morning. He then descended and hastily proceeded on his journey.

Traits of glory now painted the eastern skies. The glittering day star having unbarred the portals of light, began to transmit its retrocessive lustre. Thin scuds flew swiftly over the moon's decrecent form. Low hollow winds murmured among the bushes, or brushed the limped drops from intermingling foliage. The fire-fly sunk feebly twinkling amongst the herbage of the fields. The dusky shadows of night fled to the deep glens, and rocky caverns of the wilderness. The American lark soared high in the air, consecrating its matin lay to morn's approaching splendors. The woodlands began to ring with native melody—the forest tops, on high mountains, caught the sun's first ray, which

widening and extending, soon gem'd the landscape with brilliants of a thousand various dies.

As Alonzo came out of the fields near the road, he saw two persons pass in an open chair. They suddenly stopped, earnestly gazing at him. They were wrapped in long riding cloaks, and it could not be distinguished from their dress whether they were men or women. He stood not to notice them, but made the best of his way to Vincent's where he arrived about noon.—Rejoiced to find that he had discovered Melissa, they applauded the plan of her removal, and assisted him to obtain a carriage. A sedan was procured, and he set out to return promising to see Vincent again, as soon as he had removed Melissa to Mr. Simpson's. He made such use of his time as to arrive at the mansion at the hour appointed. He found the drawbridge down, the gate open, and saw as had been agreed upon, the light at the lower window, glimmering through the branches of trees. He was therefore assured that Melissa was alone. His heart beat ; a joyful tremor seized his frame; Melissa was soon to be under his care, for a short time at least. He drove up to the house, sprang out of the carriage, and fastened his horse to a locust tree: The door was open; he went in, flew lightly up stairs, entered her chamber Melissa was not there ! A small fire was blazing on the hearth, and a candle was burning on the table. He stood petrified with amazement, then gazed around in anxious solicitude. What could have become of her? It was impossible, he thought, but that she must still be there.

Had she been removed by fraud or force, the signal candle would not have been at the window. Perhaps, in a freakish moment, she had concealed herself for no other purpose than to cause him a little

perplexity. He therefore took the candle and searched every corner of the chamber, and every room of the house, not even missing the garret and the cellar. He then placed the candle in a lantern, and went out and examined the out-houses: he next went round the garden and the yard, strictly exploring and investigating every place; but he found her not. He repeatedly and loudly called her by name; he was answered only by the solitary echoes of the wilderness.

Again he returned to the house, traversed the rooms, there also calling on the name of Melissa: his voice reverberated from the walls, dying away in solemn murmurs in the distant empty apartments. Thus did he continue his anxious scrutiny, alternately in the house, and the enclosure until day—but no traces could be discovered, nothing seen or heard of Melissa. What had become of her he could not form the most distant conjecture. Nothing was removed from the house; the beds, the chairs, the table, all the furniture remained in the same condition as when he was there the night before;—the candle, as had been agreed upon, was at the window, and another was burning on the table: it was therefore evident that she could not have been long gone when he arrived. By what means had she thus suddenly disappeared, was a most deep and inscrutable mystery. When the sun had arisen, he once more repeated his inquisitive search, but with the same effect. He then, in extreme vexation and disappointment flung himself into the sedan, and drove from the mansion. Frequently did he look back at the building, anxiously did he scrutinize every surrounding and receding object. A thrill of pensive recollection vibrated through his frame as he passed the gate, and the keen agonizing pangs of b'asted

hope pierced his heart as the carriage rolled over the bridge.

Once more he cast 'a longing lingering look' upon the premises behind, sacred only for the treasure they lately possessed; then sunk backward in his seat, and was dragged slowly away.

Alonzo had understood from Melissa, that John's hut was situated about one mile north from the mansion where she had been confined. When he came near the road, he left his horse and carriage, after securing them, and went in search of it. He soon discovered it, and knew it from the description given thereof by Melissa. He went up and knocked at the door, which was opened by John, whom Alonzo also knew, from the portrait Melissa had drawn of him.

John started in amazement. 'Understanding,' said Alonzo, 'that you have the charge of the old mansion in yonder field, I have come to know if you can inform me what has become of the young lady who has been confined there.'

'Confined!' answered John, 'I did not know she was confined.'

Recollecting himself, 'I mean the young lady who has lately resided there with her aunt,' replied Alonzo.

'She was there last night,' answered John; 'her aunt has gone into the country and has not returned.'

Alonzo then told him the situation of the mansion, and that she was not there. John informed him that he was there about sunset, and according to her request he had left the keys of the gate and bridge with her: he desired Alonzo to tarry there until he ran to the mansion.

He returned in half an hour. 'She is gone sure enough,' said John, 'but how or where, it is impossible for me to guess.' Convinced that he knew noth-



ing of the matter, Alonzo left him and returned to Vincent's.

Vincent and his lady were much surprised, at Alonzo's account of Melissa's sudden disappearance, and they wished to ascertain whether her father's family knew any thing of the circumstance. Social intercourse had become suspended between the families of Vincent and Melissa's father, as the latter had taxed the former with improperly endeavoring to promote the views of Alonzo. They therefore procured a neighboring woman to visit Melissa's mother, to see if any information could be obtained concerning Melissa; but the old lady had heard nothing of her since her departure with her aunt, who had never yet returned. Alonzo left Vincent's and went to Mr. Simpson's. He told him all that happened since he was there, of which, before, they had heard nothing. At the house of Mr. Simpson and Vincent he resided some time, while they made the most diligent search to discover Melissa, but nothing could be learned of her fate.

Alonzo then travelled into the various parts of the country, making such enquiries as caution dictated of all whom he thought likely to give him information—but he found none who could give him the least intelligence of his lost Melissa.

In the course of his wanderings he passed near the old mansion house where Melissa had been confined. He felt an inclination once more to visit it: he proceeded over the bridge, which was down, but he found the gate locked. He therefore hurried back and went to John's who he found at home. On enquiring of John whether he had yet heard any thing of the young lady and her aunt; 'All I know of the matter,' said John, 'is, that two days after you were here, her aunt came back with a strange gen-



tleman, and ordered me to go and fetch the furniture away from the room they had occupied in the old mansion. I asked her what had become of young madam. She told me that young madam had behaved very indiscreetly, and she found fault with me for leaving the keys in her possession, though I did not know that any harm could arise from it. From the discourse which my wife and I afterwards overheard between madam and the strange gentleman, I understood that young madam had been sent to reside with some friend or relation at a great distance, because her father wanted her to marry a man and she wishes to marry somebody else.' From John's plain and simple narrative, Alonzo concluded that Melissa had been removed by her father's order, or through the agency, or instigation of her aunt. Whether his visit to the old mansion had been somehow discovered or suspected, or whether she was removed by some preconcerted or antecedent plan, he could not conjecture. Still, the situation in which he found the mansion the night he went to convey her away, left an inexplicable impression on his mind. He could in no manner account how the candle could be placed at the window according to agreement, unless it had been done by herself; and if so how had she so suddenly been conveyed away?

Alonzo asked John where Melissa's aunt now was.

'She left here yesterday morning,' he answered, 'with the strange gentleman I mentioned, on a visit to some of her friends.'

'Was the strange gentleman you speak of her brother?' asked Alonzo.

'I believe not,' replied John, smiling and winking to his wife; 'I know not who he was; somebody that madam seems to like pretty well.'

‘Have you the care of the old mansion,’ said Alonzo.

‘Yes,’ answered John, ‘I have the keys; I will accompany you thither, perhaps you would like to purchase it; madam said yesterday she thought she should sell it.’

Alonzo told him he had no thoughts of purchasing, thanked him for his information and departed.

Convinced now that Melissa was removed by the agency of her persecutors, he compared the circumstances of John’s relation. ‘She had been sent to reside with some friend or relation at a great distance.’ This great distance he believed to be New London, and her friend or relation, her cousin at, whose house Alonzo first saw her, under whose care she would be safe, and Beauman would have an opportunity of renewing his addresses. Under these impressions, Alonzo did not hesitate long what course to pursue—he determined to repair to New London immediately.

In pursuance of his design he went to his father’s. He found the old gentleman with his man contentedly tilling his farm, and his mother cheerfully attending to household affairs, as their narrow circumstances would not admit her to keep a maid without embarrassment. Alonzo’s soul sickened on comparing the present state of his family with its former affluence; but it was an unspeakable consolation to see his aged parents contented and happy in their humble situation; and though the idea could not pluck the thorn from his own bosom, yet it tended temporarily to assuage the anguish of the wound.

‘You have been long gone, my son,’ said his father; ‘I scarcely knew what had become of you. Since I have become a farmer I know but little of what is going forward in the world; and indeed we were never happier in our lives. After stocking and

paying for my farm, and purchasing the requisites for my business, I have got considerable money at my command: we live frugally and realize the blessings of health, comfort and contentment. Our only disquietude is on your account, Alonzo. Your affair with Melissa, I suppose, is not so favorable as you could wish. But despair not, my son; hope is the harbinger of fairer prospects: rely on providence, which never deserts those who submissively bow to the justice of its dispensations.'

Unwilling to disturb the serenity of his parents, Alonzo did not tell them his troubles. He answered, that perhaps all might yet come to right; but that as in the present state of his mind he thought a change of situation might be of advantage, he asked liberty of his father to travel for some little time. To this his father consented, and offered him a part of the money he had on hand, which Alonzo refused, saying he did not expect to be long gone, and his resources had not failed him.

He then sold off his books, his horses, his carriages, &c. the insignia of his better days, but now useless appendages, from which he raised no inconsiderable sum. He then took a tender and affectionate leave of his parents, and set out for New-London.

Alonzo journeyed along with a heavy heart and in an enfeebled frame of spirits. Through disappointment, vexation, and the fatigues he had undergone in wandering about, for a long time, in search of Melissa, despondency had seized upon his mind, and indisposition upon his body. He put up the first night within a few miles of New-Haven, and as he passed through the town, the next morning, the scenes of early life in which he had there been an actor, moved in melancholy succession over his mind

That day he grew more indisposed; he experienced an unusual languor, listlessness and debility; chills followed by hot flashes, heavy pains in the head and back, with incessant and intolerable thirst. It was near night when he reached Killingworth, where he halted, as he felt unable to go farther: he called for a bed, and through the night was racked with severe pain, and scorched with a burning fever.

The next morning he requested that the physician of the town might be sent for;—he came and ordered a prescription which gave his patient some relief; and by strict attention, in about ten days Alonzo was able to pursue his journey. He arrived at New-London, and took lodgings with a private family of the name of Wyllis, in a retired part of the town.

The first object was to ascertain whether Melissa was at her cousin's. But how should he obtain this information? He knew no person in the town except it was those whom he had reason to suppose were leagued against him. Should he go to the house of her cousin, it might prove an injury to her if she were there, and could answer no valuable purpose if she were not. The evening after he arrived there he wrapped himself up in his cloak and took the street which led to the house of Melissa's cousin: he stopped when he came against it, to see if he could make any discoveries. As people were passing and repassing the street, he got over into a small enclosure which adjoined the house, and stood under a tree, about thirty yards from the house: he had not long occupied this station, before a lady came to the chamber window, which was flung up, opposite to the place where he stood; she leaned out, looked earnestly around for a few minutes, then shut it and retired. She had brought a candle into the room, but did not bring it to the window; of

course he did not distinguish her features so as to identify them.

He knew it was not the wife of Melissa's cousin, and from her appearance he believed it to be Melissa. Again the window opened, again the same lady appeared;—she took a seat at a little distance within the room; she reclined with her head upon her hand, and her arm appeared to be supported by a stand or table. Alonzo's heart beat violently; he had a side view of her face, was more than ever convinced that it was Melissa. Her delicate features though more pale and dejected than when last he saw her;—her brown hair which fell in artless circles around her lily neck; her arched eyebrows and commanding aspect. Alonzo moved towards the house, with a design if possible, to draw her attention, and should it really prove to be Melissa, to discover himself. He had proceeded but a few steps before she arose, shut the window, retired, and the light disappeared. Alonzo waited a considerable time, but she appeared no more. Supposing she had retired for the night he slowly withdrew, chagrined at this disappointment, yet pleased at the discovery he had made.

The family with whom Alonzo had taken lodgings were fashionable and respectable. The following afternoon they had appointed to visit a friend, and they invited Alonzo to accompany them. When they named the family where their visit was intended, he found it to be Melissa's cousin. Alonzo therefore declined going under pretence of business. He however waited with anxiety for their return, hoping he should be able to learn by their conversation whether Melissa was there or not. When they returned he made some inquiries concerning the families in town, until the conversation turned upon the

family they had visited. 'The young lady who resides there,' said Mrs. Wyllis, 'is undoubtedly in a confirmed decline; she will never recover.'

Alonzo started, deeply agitated. 'Who is the young lady?' he asked. 'She is sister to the gentleman's wife where we visited,' answered Mr. Wyllis; 'her father lives in Newport, and she has come here for her health.' 'Do you not think,' said Mrs. Wyllis, 'that she resembles her cousin Melissa, who resided there some time ago?' 'Very much indeed,' replied the husband, 'only she is not quite so handsome.'

Again was Alonzo disappointed, and again did he experience a melancholy pleasure: he had the last night hoped that he had discovered Melissa; but to find her in a hopeless decline, was worse than that she should remain undiscovered.

'It is reported,' said Mrs. Wyllis, 'that Melissa has been upon the verge of matrimony, but that the treaty was somehow broken off; perhaps Beauman will renew his addresses again, should this be the case.' 'Beauman has other business besides addressing the ladies,' answered Mr. Wyllis. 'He has marched to the lines near New-York, with his new raised company of volunteers.'\*

From this discourse, Alonzo was convinced that Melissa was not the person he had seen at her cousin's the preceding evening, and that she was not there. He also found that Beauman was not in town. Where to search next, or what course to pursue, he was at a loss to determine.

The next morning he rose early and wandered about the town. As he passed by the house of Me-

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\*New-York was then in possession of the British troops.

lissa's cousin, he saw the lady who had appeared at the window, walking in the garden. Her air, her figure, had very much the appearance of Melissa; but the lineaments of her countenance were, when viewed by the light of day, widely dissimilar. Alonzo felt no curiosity farther to examine her features, but passing on returned to his lodgings.

How he was now to proceed, Alonzo could not readily decide. To return to his native place, appeared to be as useless as to tarry where he was. For many weeks he had travelled and searched every place where he thought it probable Melissa might be found, among her relatives and elsewhere. He made every effort to obtain some clue to her removal from the old mansion, but he could learn nothing but what he had been told by John. If his friends should ever hear of her, they could not inform him thereof, as no one knew where he was. Would it not therefore be best for him to return back and consult with his friends, and if nothing had been heard of her, pursue some other mode of inquiry? he might at least leave directions where his friends might write to him, in case they should have any thing whereof to apprise him.

An incident tended to confirm this resolution. He one night dreamed that he was sitting in a strange house, contemplating on his present situation, when Melissa suddenly entered the room. Her appearance was more pale, sickly and dejected than when he last saw her. Her elegant form had wasted away, her eyes were sunk, her cheeks fallen, her lips livid. He fancied it to be night, she held a candle in her hand, smiling languidly upon him;—she turned and went out of the room, beckoning him to follow. He thought he immediately arose and followed her. She glided through several winding rooms, and at length



he lost sight of her, and the light gradually fading away, he was involved in deep darkness. He groped along, and at length saw a faint distant glimmer, the course of which he pursued until he came into a large room, hung with black tapestry, and illuminated by a number of bright tapers. On one side of the room appeared a hearse on which some person was laid, he went up to it—the first object that arrested his attention, was the lovely form of Melissa, shrouded in the sable vestments of death. Cold and lifeless she lay stretched upon the hearse, beautiful even in dissolution; the dying smile of complacency had not yet deserted her cheek. The music of her voice had ceased, her fine eyes had closed forever. Insensible to objects in which she once delighted; to afflictions which had blasted her blooming prospects, and drained the streams of life, she lay like blossomed trees of spring overthrown by rude and boisterous winds. The deep groans which convulsed the distracted bosom, and shocked the trembling frame of Alonzo, broke the delusive charm: he awoke rejoiced to find it but a dream, though it impressed his mind with doleful and portentous forebodings.

It was a long time before he could again close his eyes to sleep; he at length fell into a slumber, and again he dreamed. He fancied himself with Melissa, at the house of her father, who had consented to their union, and that the marriage ceremony between them was there performed. He thought that Melissa appeared as she had done in her most fortunate and sprightly days, before the darts of adversity, and the thorns of affliction had wounded her heart. Her father seemed to be distressed of all his awful sternness, and gave her to Alonzo with cheerful freedom. He awoke and the

horrors of his former dream were dissipated by the happy influence of the last.

‘Who knows,’ he said, ‘but that this may finally be the case; but that the sun of peace may yet dispel these distressful hours!’ He arose determined to return home in a few days, he went out and enjoyed his morning walk in a more composed frame of spirits than he had for some time experienced. He returned and as he was entering the door he saw the weekly newspaper of the town which had been published that morning, and which the carrier had just flung into the hall. The family had not yet arisen. He took up the paper and carried it to his chamber, and opened it to read the news of the day. He ran his eye hastily over it, and was about to lay it aside, when the death list attracted his attention, by a display of broad black lines. The first article he read therein was as follows.

‘Died of a consumption on the 26th ult. at the seat of her uncle, Col. W. D——, near Charleston, South Carolina, whither she had repaired for her health, Miss Melissa D——, the amiable daughter of J. D——, Esq. of ——, Connecticut, in the eighteenth year of her age.’

The paper fell from the palsied hand—a sudden faintness came upon him—the room grew dark—he staggered, and fell senseless upon the floor.

The incidents of our story will here produce a pause. —The fanciful part of our readers may cast it aside in chagrin and disappointment. ‘Such an event,’ may they say, ‘we were not prepared to expect. After so many and such various trials of heart; after innumerable difficulties surmounted; almost invincible objects overcome, and insuperable barriers removed—after attending the hero and heroine of your tale through the diversified scenes a

anxiety, suspense, hope, disappointment, expectation—joy, sorrow, anticipated bliss, sudden and disastrous woe—after elevating them to the threshold of happiness, by the premature death of one, to plunge the other, instantaneously in deep and irretrievable despair, must not, cannot be right. Your story will hereafter become languid and spiritless; the subject will be uninteresting, the theme unengaging, since the genius which animated and enlivened it is gone forever.

Reader of sensibility, stop. Are we not detailing facts? Shall we gloss them over with false coloring? Shall we describe things as they are, or as they are not? Shall we draw with the pencil of nature, or of art? Do we indeed paint life as it is, or as it is not? Cast thine eyes, reader, over the ephemeral circle of passing and fortuitous events? view the change of contingencies; mark well the varied and shifting scenery in the great drama of time;—seriously contemplate nature in her operations; minutely examine the entrance the action and the exit of characters on the stage of existence—then say if disappointment, distress, misery and calamitous woe, are not the inalienable portion of the susceptible bosom. Say if the possession of refined feeling is enviable—the lot of Nature's children covetable—whether to such through life, the sprinklings of comfort are sufficient to give a zest to the bitter banquets of adversity—whether indeed, sorrow, sighing, and tears, are not the inseparable attendants of all those whose hearts are the repositories of tender affections and pathetic sympathies.

But what says the moralist?—'Portray life as it is. Delude not the senses by deceptive appearances. Arouse your hero?—call to his aid stern philosophy and sober reason. They will dissipate

the rainbow-glories of unreal pleasure, and banish the glittering meteors of unsubstantial happiness. Or if these fail, lead him to the holy fane of religion; she will regulate the fires of fancy, and assuage the tempest of the passions: she will illuminate the dark wilderness, and smooth the thorny paths of life: she will point him to joys beyond the tomb—to another and a better world; and pour the balm of consolation and serenity over his wounded soul.'

Shall we indeed arouse Alonzo? Alas to what paths of grief and wretchedness shall we rouse him! To a world to him void and cheerless—a world desolate, sad and dreary.

Alonzo revived. 'Why am I,' he exclaimed, 'recalled to this dungeon of torment? Why was not my spirit permitted to take its flight to regions where my guardian angel is gone? Why am I cursed with memory? Oh that I might be blessed with forgetfulness! But why do I talk of blessings?—Heaven never had one in store for me. Where are fled my anticipated joys? To the bosom, the dark bosom of the oblivious tomb! There lie all the graces worthy of love in life—all the virtues worthy of lamentation in death. There lies perfection: perfection has here been found. Was she not all that even heaven could demand? Fair, lovely, holy and virtuous.—Her tender solitudes, her enrapturing endearments, her soul inspiring blandishments, gone, gone forever? That heavenly form, that discriminate mind—all lovely as light, all pure as a seraph's—a prey to worms—mingled with incoporeal shadows, regardless of former inquietudes or delights, regardless of the keen anguish which now wrings tears of blood from my despairing heart.

‘Eternal disposer of events! if virtue be thy special care, why is the fairest flower in the garden of innocence and purity blasted like a noxious weed? why is the bright gem of excellence trampled in the dust like a worthless pebble?—Why is Melissa hurried to the tomb?’

Thus raved Alonzo. It was evident that delirium had partially seized his brain. He arose and flung himself on the bed in unspeakable agony. ‘And what, alas!’ he again exclaimed, ‘now remains for me? Existence and unparalleled misery. The consolation even of death is denied me. But Melissa! she—ah, where is she! Oh, reflection insupportable! insufferable consideration! Must that heavenly frame putrify, moulder and crumble into dust? Must the loathsome spider nestle on her lily bosom? the odious reptile riot on her delicate limbs? the worm revel amid the roses of her cheek, fatten on her temples, and bask in the lustre of her eyes? Alas! the lustre has become dimmed in death; the rose and the lily are withered; the harmony of her voice has ceased; the graces, the elegancies of form, the innumerable delicacies of air, all are gone, and I am left in a state of misery which defies mitigation or comparison.’

Exhausted by excess of grief, he now lay in a stupefying anguish, until the servant summoned him to breakfast. He told the servant he was indisposed and requested he might not be disturbed. Mr. Wylis and his lady came up, anxious to yield him any assistance in their power, and advised him to call a physician. He thanked them but told them it was unnecessary; he only wanted rest. His extreme distress of mind brought on a relapse of fever, from which he had but imperfectly recovered. For several days he lay in a very dangerous and doubtful

state. A physician was called; contrary to his choice or knowledge, as for most part of the time his mind was delirious and sensation imperfect. This was probably the cause of baffling the disorder. He was in a measure insensible to his woes. He did not oppose the prescriptions of his physician. The fever abated: nature triumphed over disease of body and he slowly recovered, but the malady of his mind was not removed.

He contemplated on the past. 'I fear,' said he, 'I have murmured against the wisdom of Providence. Forgive, O, merciful Creator! forgive the frenzies of distraction!' He now recollected that Melissa once told him that she had an uncle who resided near Charleston, in South Carolina; thither he supposed she had been sent by her father, when she was removed from the old mansion, in order to prevent his having access to her, and with a view to compel her to marry Beauman. Her appearance had indicated a deep decline when he last saw her. 'There,' said he, 'far removed from friends and acquaintance, there did she languish, there did she die—a victim to excessive grief, and cruel parental persecution.'

As soon as he was able to leave his room, he walked out one evening, and in deep contemplation roved, he knew not where. The moon shone brilliantly from her lofty throne; the chill heavy dews of autumn glittered on the decaying verdure. The cad-eat\* crouched hoarsely among the trees; the dircelet

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\*Local names given to certain American insects, from their sound. They are well known in various parts of the United States; generally make their appearance about the latter end of August, and continue until destroyed by the frost. The notes of the

lung mournfully on the grass. Alonzo heard them not ; he was insensible to all external objects, until he had imperceptibly wandered to the rock on the point of the beach, verging the Sound, to which he had attended Melissa the first time he saw her at her cousin's. Had the whole artillery of heaven burst in sheeted flame from the skies—had raging winds mingled the roaring waves with the mountains—had an instantaneous earthquake burst beneath his feet, his frame would not have been so shocked, his soul so agitated! Sudden as the blaze darts from the electric cloud was he aroused to a lively sense of blessings entombed! The memory of departed joys passed with rapidity over his imagination; his first meeting with Melissa;—the evening he had attended her to that place; her frequent allusions to the scenery there displayed, when they had traversed the fields or reclined in the bower on her favorite hill; in fine, all the vicissitudes through which they had passed, were called to his mind. His fancy saw her—he felt her gently leaning on his arm, while he tremblingly pressed her hand. Again he saw smiling health crimsoning the lillies of her cheek;—again he saw the bright soul of sympathetic feelings sparkling in her eye: the air of ease; the graces of attitude; her brown locks circling the borders of her snowy robe. Again he was enraptured by the melody of her voice. Once more would he have been happy had not fancy changed the scene. But alas, she shifted the curtain. He saw Melissa stretched on the sable hearse, wrapped in the dreary vestments of the grave; the roses withered ; the lillies faded; motionless; the graces fled;

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first are hoarse, sprightly and discordant ; of the last solemn and mournfully pleasing.



her eyes fixed, and sealed in the glaze of death! Spontaneously he fell upon his knees, and thus poured forth the overcharged burden of his anguished bosom:

“Infinite Ruler of all events! Great Sovereign of this ever changing world! Omnipotent Controller of vicissitudes! Omniscient dispenser of destinies! The beginning, the progression, the end is thine. Unsearchable are thy purposes! mysterious thy movements! inscrutable thy operations! An atom of thy creation, wildered in the mazes of ignorance and woe, would bow to thy decrees. Surrounded with impenetrable gloom, unable to scrutinize the past, incompetent to explore the future——fain would he say, *THY WILL BE DONE?* And, Oh, that it might be consistent with that *HIGH WILL* to call *this atom* from a dungeon of wretchedness, to worlds of light and glory, where his only *CONSOLATION* is gone.”

Thus prayed the heart-broken Alonzo. It was indeed a worldly prayer; but perhaps as pure and as acceptable as many of our modern professors would have made on a similar occasion. He arose and repaired to his lodging. One determination only he had now fallen upon—to bury himself and his griefs from all with whom he had formerly been acquainted. Why should he return to the scenes of his former bliss and anxiety, where every door would be inscribed with a *memento mori*, and where every object would be shrouded in crape? He therefore turned his attention to the army; but the army was far distant, and he was too feeble to prosecute a journey of such an extent.

There were at that time preparations for fitting out a convoy, at private expense, from various parts of the United States, for the protection of our European trade; they were to rendezvous at a certain

station, and thence proceed with the merchantmen under their care, to the ports of France and Holland, where our trade principally centered, and re turn as convoy to some other mercantile fleet.

One of these ships of war was then nearly fitted out at New London. Alonzo offered himself to the captain, who, pleased with his appearance, gave him the station of commander of marines.

Alonzo prepared himself with all speed for the voyage. He sought, he wished no acquaintance. His only place of resort, except to his lodgings and the ship, was to Melissa's favorite rock ; there he bowed as to the shrine of her spirit, and there he consecrated his devotions.

As he was one day passing through the town, a gentleman stepped out of an adjoining house and accosted him. Alonzo immediately recognized him to be the cousin of Melissa, at whose house he had first seen her. He was dressed in full mourning, which was a sufficient indication that he was apprised of her death. He invited Alonzo to his house, and he could not complaisantly refuse the invitation. He therefore accepted it, and passed an hour with him, from whom he learnt that Melissa had been sent to her uncle's at Charleston, for the recovery of her health, where she died. " Her premature death," said her cousin, " has borne so heavily upon her aged father, that it is feared he will not long survive."—"Well may it wring his bosom," thought Alonzo:—"his conscience can never be at peace." Whether Melissa's cousin had been informed of the particulars of Alonzo's unfortunate attachment, was not known, as he instituted no conversation on the subject. Neither did he enquire into Alonzo's prospects ; he only invited him to call again.

Alonzo thanked him, but replied it would be

doubtful as he should shortly leave town. He made no one acquainted with his intentions.

The day at length arrived when the ship was to sail, and Alonzo to leave the shores of America. They spread their canvass to propitious gales ; the breezes rushed from their woody coverts, and majestically wafted them from the harbor.

Slowly the land receded ; fields, forests, hills, mountains, towns and villages leisurely withdrew, until they were mingled in one common mass. The ocean opening, expanded and widened, presenting to the astonished eyes of the untried mariner its wilderness of waters. Near sunset Alonzo ascended the mast to take a last view of a country once so dear, but whose charms were now lost forever. The land still appeared like a semicircular border of dark green velvet on the edge of a convex mirror. The sun sunk in fleecy golden vapors behind it. It now dwindled to discolored and irregular spots, which appeared like objects floating, amidst the blue mists of distance, on the verge of the main, and immediately all was lost beneath the spherical, watery surface.

Alonzo had fixed his eyes, as near as his judgment could direct, towards Melissa's favorite rock, till nothing but sea was discoverable. With a heart parting sigh he then descended. They had now launched into the illimitable world of billows, and the sable wings of night brooded over the boundless deep.

A new scene was now opened to Alonzo in the wonders of the mighty deep. The sun rising from and setting in the ocean ; the wide-spread region of watery waste, now smooth as polished glass, now urged into irregular rolling hillocks, then swelled to

“ Blue trembling billows, topp'd with foam,”

or gradually arising into mountainous waves. Often would he traverse the deck amid the still hours of midnight, when the moon silvered over the liquid surface: "Bright luminary of the lonely hour," he would say, "that now sheddest thy mild and placid ray on the woe-worn head of fortune's fugitive, dost thou not also pensively shine on the sacred and silent grave of my Melissa?"

Favorable breezes wafted them for many days over the bosom of the Atlantic.—At length they were overtaken by a violent storm. The wind began to blow strongly from the southwest, which soon increased to a violent gale. The dirgy scud first flew swiftly along the sky; then dark and heavy clouds filled the atmosphere, mingling with the top-gallant streamers of the ship. Night hovered over the ocean, rendered horrible by the intermitting blaze of lightnings, the awful crash of thunder, and the deafening roar of winds and waves. The sea was rolled into mountains, capped with foaming fire. Now the ship was soaring among the thunders of heaven, now sunk in the abyss of waters.

The storm dispersed the fleet, so that when it abated, the ship in which Alonzo sailed was found alone; they, however, kept on their course of destination, after repairing their rigging, which had been considerably disordered by the violence of the gale.

The next morning they discovered a sail which they fondly hoped might prove to be one of their own fleet, and accordingly made for it. The ship they were in pursuit of shortened sail, and towards noon wore round and bore down upon them, when they discovered that it was not a ship belonging to their convoy. It appeared to be of equal force and dimensions with that of their own; they therefore,

in order to prepare for the worst, got ready with all speed for action. They slowly approached each other, manœuvring for the advantage, till the strange ship ran up British colors, and fired a gun, which was immediately answered by the other, under the flag of the United States. It was not long before a close and severe action took place, which continued for three hours, when both ships were in so shattered a condition that they were unable to manage a gun.\* The British had lost their captain, and one half their crew, most of the remainder being wounded.—The Americans had lost their second officer, and their loss in men, both killed and wounded, was nearly equal to that of the enemy.

While they lay in this condition, unable either to annoy each other more, or to get away, a large sail appeared, bearing down upon them, which soon came up and proved to be an English frigate, and which immediately took the American ship in tow, after removing the crew into the hold of the frigate. The crew of the British ship were also taken on board of the frigate, which was no sooner done than the ship went down and was buried beneath mountains of ponderous waves. The frigate then, with the American ship in tow, made sail, and in a few days reached England. The wounded prisoners were sent to a hospital, but the others were confined in a strong prison within the precincts of London.

The American prisoners were huddled into an apartment with British convicts of various descriptions. Among these Alonzo observed one whose demeanor arrested his attention. A deep melancholy

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\* The particulars of this action, in the early stage of the American war, are yet remembered by many.

was impressed upon his features; his eye was wild and despairing; his figure was interesting, tall, elegant and handsome. He appeared to be about twenty-five years of age. He seldom conversed, but when he did, it was readily discovered that his education had been above the common cast, and he possessed an enlightened and discriminating mind. Alonzo sympathetically sought his acquaintance, and discovered therein a unison of woe.

One evening, when the prisoners were retired to rest, the stranger, upon Alonzo's request, rehearsed the following incidents of his life.

"You express," said he, "some surprise at finding a man of my appearance in so degraded a situation; and you wish to learn the events which have plunged me in this abject state. These, when I briefly relate, your wonder will cease.

"My name is Henry Malcomb; my father was a clergyman in the west of England, and descended from one of the most respectable families in those parts. I received a classical education, and then entered the military school, as I was designed for the army, to which my earliest inclinations led. As soon as my education was considered complete, an ensign's commission was procured for me in one of the regiments destined for the West Indies. Previous to its departure for those islands, I became acquainted with a Miss Vernon, who was a few years younger than myself, and the daughter of a gentleman farmer, who had recently purchased and removed to an estate in my father's parish. Every thing that was graceful and lovely appeared centered in her person; every thing that was virtuous and excellent in her mind. I sought her hand. Our souls soon became united by the indissoluble bonds of sincerest love, and as there were no parental or other

impediments to our union, it was agreed that as soon as I returned from the Indies, where it was expected that my stay would be short, the marriage solemnities should be performed. Solemn oaths of constancy passed between us, and I sailed with my regiment, for the Indies.

“ While there, I received from her, and returned letters filled with the tenderest expressions of anxiety and regret of absence. At length the time came when we were to embark for England, where we arrived after an absence of about eighteen months. The moment I got on land I hastened to the house of Mr. Vernon, so see the charmer of my soul. She received me with all the ardency of affection, and even shed tears of joy in my presence. I pressed her to name the day which was to perfect our union and happiness, and the next Sunday, four days only distant, was agreed upon for me to lead her to the altar. How did my heart bound at the prospect of making Miss Vernon my own!—of possessing in her all that could render life agreeable; I hastened home to my family and informed them of my approaching bliss, who all sympathized in the anticipated joy which swelled my bosom.

“ I had a sister some years older than myself, who had been the friend and inmate of my angel in my absence. They were now almost every day together, so that I had frequent opportunities of her company. One day she had been with my sister at my father’s, and I attended her home. On my return, my sister requested me to attend her in a private room. We therefore retired, and when we were seated she thus addressed me.

“ Henry, you know that to promote your peace, your welfare, and your happiness, has ever been the pride of my heart. Nothing except this could ex-



tort the secret which I shall now disclose, and which has yet remained deposited in my own bosom: my duty to a brother whom I esteem dear as life, forbids me to remain silent. As an affectionate sister, I cannot tacitly see you thus imposed upon; I cannot see you the dupe and slave of an artful and insidious woman, who does not sincerely return your love, nor can I bear to see your marriage consummated with one whose soul and affections are placed upon another object."

"Here she hesitated—while I, with insufferable anguish of mind, begged her to proceed.

"About six or eight months after your departure," she continued, "it was reported to Miss Vernon that she had a rival in the Indies; that you had there found an American beauty, on whom you lavished those endearments which belonged of right to her alone. This news made, at first, a deep impression on her mind, but it soon wore away; and whether from this cause, from fickleness of disposition, or that she never sincerely loved you, I know not; but this I do know, that a youth has been for some time past her almost constant companion. To convince you of this, you need only tomorrow evening, about sunset, conceal yourself near the long avenue by the side of the rivulet, back of Mr. Vernon's country-house, where you will undoubtedly surprise Miss Vernon and her companion in their usual evening's walk. If I should be mistaken I will submit to your censure; but should you find it as I have predicted, you have only to rush from your concealment, charge her with her perfidy, and renounce her forever."

"Of all the plagues, of all the torments, of all the curses which torture the soul, jealousy of a rival in love is the worst. Enraged, confounded and as-

tonished, it seemed as if my bosom would have instantaneously burst. To conceal my emotions, I left my sister's apartment, after having thanked her for her information, and proceeded to obey her injunction. I retired to my own room, and there poured out my execrations.

"Cursed woman!" I exclaimed, "is it thus you requite my tender love! Could a vague report of my inconstancy drive you to infidelity! Did not my continual letters breathe constant adoration? And did not yours pourtray the same sincerity of affection? No, it was not that which caused you to perjure your plighted vows. It was that damnable passion for novelty, which more or less holds a predominancy over your whole sex. To a new coat, a new face, a new lover, you will sacrifice honor, principle and virtue. And to those, backed by splendid power and splendid property, you will forfeit your most sacred engagements, though made in the presence of heaven.—Thus did I rave through a sleepless night.

"The next day I walked into the fields, and before the time my sister appointed had arrived, I worked up my feelings almost to the frenzy of distraction. I repaired however, to the spot, and concealed myself in the place she had named, which was a tuft of laurels by the side of the walk. I soon perceived Miss Vernon strolling down the avenue, arm in arm with a young man elegantly dressed, and of singular, delicate appearance. They were earnestly conversing in a low tone of voice; the hand of my false fair one was gently pressed in the hands of the stranger. As soon as they had passed the place of my concealment, they turned aside and seated themselves in a little arbor, a few yards distant from where I sat. The stranger clasp

ed Miss Vernon in his arms: "Dearest angel!" he exclaimed, "what an interruption to our bliss by the return of my hated rival!" With fond caresses and endearing blandishments, "fear nothing," she replied; "I have promised and must yield him my hand, but you shall never be excluded from my heart; we shall find sufficient opportunities for private conference." I could contain myself no longer—my brain was on fire. Quick as lightning I sprang from my covert, and presenting a pistol which I had concealed under my robe,—“Die!” said I, “thou false and perjured wretch, by the hand thou hast dishonored, a death too mild for so foul a crime!” and immediately shot Miss Vernon through the head, who fell lifeless at my feet! Then suddenly drawing my sword, “And thou, perfidious contaminator and destroyer of my bliss!” cried I—“go!—attend thy companion in iniquity to the black regions of everlasting torment!” So saying, I plunged the sword into his bosom. A screech of agony, attended by the exclamation, “*Henry, your wife! your sister!*” awoke me, too late, to terrors unutterable, to anguish unspeakable, to woes irretrievable, and insupportable despair! It was indeed my betrothed wife, it was indeed my affectionate sister, arrayed in man’s habit. The one lay dead before me, the other weltering in her blood! With a feeble and expiring voice, my sister informed me, that in a gay and inconsiderate moment they had concerted this plan, to try my jealousy, determining to discover themselves as soon as they had made the experiment. “I forgive you Henry,” she said, “I forgive your mistake,” and closed her eyes forever in death! What a scene for sensibilities like mine! To paint or describe it, exceeds the power of language or imagination. I instantly turned the sword against my own

bosom, an unknown hand arrested it, and prevented its entering my heart. The report of the pistol, and the dying screech of my sister, had alarmed Mr. Vernon's family, who arrived at that moment, one of whom had seized my arm, and thus hindered me from destroying my own life. I submitted to be bound and conveyed to prison. My trial came on at the last assizes. I made no defence; and was condemned to death. My execution will take place in eight weeks from to-morrow. I shall cheerfully meet my fate; for who would endure life when rendered so peculiarly miserable!"

The wretched Malcomb here ended his tale of woe. No tear moistened his eye—his grief was too despairing for tears; it preyed upon his heart, drank the vital streams of life, and burst in convulsive sighs from his burning bosom.

Alonzo seriously contemplated on the incidents and events of the tragical story. Conscience whispered him, are not Malcomb's miseries superior to thine? Candor and correct reason must have answered yes. "Melissa perished," said Alonzo, "but not by the hand of her lover: she expired, but not through the mistaken frenzy of him who adored her. She died, conscious of the unfeigned love I bore her."

Alonzo and his fellow prisoners had been robbed, when they were captured, of every thing except the clothes they wore. Their allowance of provisions was scanty and poor. They were confined in the third story of a lofty prison. Time rolled away; no prospects appeared of their liberation, either by exchange or parole. Some of the prisoners were removed, as new ones were introduced, to other places of confinement until not one American was left except Alonzo.

Meantime the day appointed for the execution of Malcomb drew near. His past and approaching fate filled the breast of Alonzo with sympathetic sorrow. He saw his venerable father, his mother his friends and acquaintance, with several pious clergymen, frequently enter the prison to console and comfort him, and to prepare him for the unchangeable state on which he was soon to enter. He saw his mind softened by their advice and counsel;—frequently would he burst into tears;—often in the solitary hours of night was he heard addressing the throne of grace for mercy and forgiveness. But the grief that preyed at his heart had wasted him to a mere skeleton; a slow but deleterious fever had consequently implanted itself in his constitution. Exhausted nature could make but a weak struggle against disease and affliction like his, and about a week previous to the day appointed for his execution, he expired in peace and penitence, trusting in the mercy of his Creator through the sufferings of a Redeemer.

Soon after this event, orders came for removing some of the prisoners to a most loathsome place of confinement in the suburbs of the city. It fell to Alonzo's lot to be one. He therefore formed a project for escaping. He had observed that the gratings in one of the windows of the apartment were loose and could be easily removed. One night when the prisoners were asleep, he stripped off his clothes, every article of which he cut into narrow strips, tied them together, fastened one end to one of the strongest gratings, removed the others until he had made an opening large enough to get out, and then, by the rope he had made of his clothes, let himself down into the yard of the prison. There he found a long piece of timber, which he dragged to the

wall, clambered up thereon, and sprang over into the street. His shoes and hat he had left in the prison, as a useless encumbrance without his clothes, all which he had converted into the means of escape, so that he was now literally stark naked. He stood a moment to reflect:—"Here am I," said he, "freed from my local prison indeed, but in the midst of an enemy's country, without a friend, without the means of obtaining one day's subsistence, surrounded by the darkness of night, destitute of a single article of clothing, and even unable to form a resolution what step next to take. The ways of heaven are marvellous—may I silently bow to its dispensations!"

Alonzo passed along the street in this forlorn condition, not knowing where to proceed, or what course to take. It was about three o'clock in the morning; the street was illuminated by lamps, and he feared falling into the hands of the watch. For some time he saw no person, at length a voice from the other side of the street called out,—“Hallo, messmate! what, scudding under bare poles? You have experienced a severe gale indeed thus to have carried away every rag of sail!”

Alonzo turned, and saw the person who spoke. He was a decent looking man, of middle age, dressed in a sailor's habit. Alonzo had often heard of the generosity and honorable conduct of the British tars: he therefore approached him and told him his real case, not even concealing his being taken in actual hostility to the British government, and his escape from prison. The sailor mused for a few minutes. “Thy case,” said he, “is a little critical, but do not despair. Had I met thee as an enemy, I should have fought thee; but as it is, compassion is the first consideration. Perhaps I may be in as bad

a situation before the war is ended." Then slipping off his coat and giving it to Alonzo, "follow me," he said, and turning, walked hastily along the street followed by Alonzo; he passed into a bye-lane, entered a small house, and taking Alonzo into a back room, opened a trunk, and handed out a shirt: "there," said he, pointing to a bed, "you can sleep till morning, when we will see what can be done."

The next morning the sailor brought in a very decent suit of clothes and presented them to Alonzo. "You will make this place your home," said he, "until more favorable prospects appear. In this great city you will be safe, for even your late gaoler would not recognize you in this dress. And perhaps some opportunity may offer by which you may return to your own country." He told Alonzo that his name was Jack Brown, that he was a midshipman on board the *Severn*; that he had a wife and four children, and owned the house in which they then were. "In order to prevent suspicion or discovery," said he, "I shall consider you as a relation from the country until you are better provided for." Alonzo was then introduced to the sailor's wife, an amiable woman, and here he remained for several weeks.

One day Alonzo was informed that a number of American prisoners were brought in. He went to the place where they were landed, and saw several led away to prison, and some who were sick or disabled, carried to the hospital. As the hospital was near at hand, Alonzo entered it to see how the sick and disabled prisoners were treated.

He found that they received as much attention as as could reasonably be expected.\* As he passed a-

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\* The Americans who were imprisoned in England, in the time of war, were treated with much



long the different apartments he was surprised at hearing his name called by a faint voice. He turned to the place from whence it proceeded, and saw stretched on a mattress, a person who appeared on the point of expiring. His visage was pale and emaciated, his countenance haggard and ghastly, his eyes inexpressive and glazy. He held out his withered hand, and feebly beckoned to Alonzo, who immediately approached him. His features appeared not unfamiliar to Alonzo, but for a moment he could not recollect him. "You do not know me," said the apparently dying stranger. "Beauman!" exclaimed Alonzo, in surprise. "Yes," replied the sick man, "it is Beauman—you behold me on the verge of eternity, I have but a short time to continue in this world." Alonzo enquired how he came in the power of the enemy. "By the fate of war," he replied; "I was taken in an action on York Island, carried on board a prison-ship in New-York, and sent with a number of others for England. I had received a wound in my thigh, from a musket ball, during the action; the wound mortified, and my thigh was amputated on the voyage; since which I have been rapidly wasting away, and I now feel that the cold hand of death is laid upon me." Here he became exhausted, and for some time remained silent. Alonzo had not before discovered that he had lost his leg: he now discovered that it had been taken off close to his body, and that he was worn to a skeleton. When Beauman revived, he enquired into Alonzo's affairs. Alonzo related all that had happened to him after leaving New London.

"You are unhappy, Alonzo," said Beauman, "in the

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more humanity than those who were imprisoned at Halifax and other places in America.

death of your Melissa, to which it is possible I have been undesignedly accessory. I could say much on the subject, would my strength permit; but it is needless. She is gone and I must soon go also. She was sent to her uncle's at Charleston, by her father, where I was soon to follow her. It was supposed that thus widely removed from all access to your company, she would yield to the persuasion of her friends to renounce you: her unexpected death, however, frustrated every design of this nature, and overwhelmed her father and family in inexpressible woe."

Here Beauman ceased. Alonzo found he wanted rest: he enquired whether he was in want of any thing to make him more comfortable. Beauman replied that he was not: "For the comforts of this life," said he, "I have no relish; medical aid is applied, but without effect." Alonzo then left him promising to call again in the morning.

When Alonzo called the next morning, he perceived an alarming alteration in Beauman. His extremities were cold, a chilling, clammy sweat stood upon his face, his respiration was short and interrupted, his pulse weak and intermitting. He took the hand of Alonzo, and feebly pressing it,—“I am dying,” said he in a faint voice. “If ever you return to America, inform my friends of my fate.” This Alonzo readily engaged to do, and told him also that he would not leave him.

Beauman soon fell into a stupor; sensation became suspended; his eyes rolled up and fixed. Sometimes a partial revival would take place, when he would fall into incoherent muttering, calling on the names of his deceased father, his mother and Melissa; his voice dying away in imperfect moanings, till his lips continued to move without sound. Towards

night he lay silent, and only continued to breathe with difficulty, till a slight convulsion gave the freed spirit to the unknown regions of immaterial existence. Alonzo followed his remains to the grave: a natural stone was placed at his head, on which Alonzo, unobserved, carved the initials of the deceased's name, with the date of his death, and left him to moulder with his native dust.

A few days after this event, Jack Brown informed Alonzo, that he had procured the means of his escape. A person with whom I am acquainted, said he, and whom I suppose to be a smuggler, has agreed to carry you to France. There, by application to the American minister, you will be enabled to get to your own country, if that is your object. About midnight I will pilot you on board, and by tomorrow's sun you may be in France."

At the time appointed, Jack set out, bearing a large trunk on his shoulder, and directed Alonzo to follow him. They proceeded down to a quay, and went on board a small skiff. "Here" said Jack to the captain, "is the gentleman I spoke to you about," and delivered him the trunk. Then taking Alonzo aside, "in that trunk," said he, "are a few changes of linen, and here is something to help you till you can help yourself." So saying, he slipped ten guineas into his hand. Alonzo expressed his gratitude with tears. "Say nothing," said Jack, "we were born to help each other in distress, and may Jack never weather a storm or splice a rope, if he permits a fellow creature to suffer with want while he has a luncheon on board." He then shook Alonzo by the hand, wishing him a good voyage, and went whistling away. The skiff soon sailed, and the next morning Alonzo was landed in France. Alonzo proceeded immediately to Paris, not with a

view of returning to America; he had no relish for revisiting the land of his sorrows, the scenes where at every step his heart must bleed afresh, though to bleed it had never ceased. But he was friendless in a strange land: perhaps, through the aid of the American minister, Dr. Franklin, to whose fame Alonzo was no stranger, he might be placed in a situation to procure bread, which was all he at present hoped or wished.

He therefore presented himself before the doctor, whom he found in his study.—To be informed that he was an American and unfortunate, was sufficient to arouse the feelings of Franklin. He desired Alonzo to be seated, and to recite his history. This he readily complied with, not concealing his attachment to Melissa, her father's barbarity, her death in consequence, his own father's failure, with all the particulars of his leaving America, his capture, escape from prison, and arrival in France; as also the town of his nativity, the name of his father, and the particular circumstances of his family; concluding by expressing his unconquerable reluctance to return to his native country, which now would be to him only a gloomy wilderness, and that his present object was only some means of support.

The doctor enquired of Alonzo the particular circumstances and time of his father's failure. Of this Alonzo gave him a minute account. Franklin then sat in deep contemplation for the space of fifteen minutes, without speaking a word. He then took his pen, wrote a short note, directed it, and gave it to Alonzo: "Deliver this," said he, "to the person to whom it is directed; he will find you employment, until something more favorable may offer."

Alonzo took the note, thanked the doctor, and went in search of the person to whom it was ad-

addressed. He soon found the house, which was situated in one of the most popular streets in Paris. He knocked at the door, which was opened by an elderly looking man: Alonzo enquired for the man to whom the note was addressed. The gentleman informed him that he was the man. Alonzo presented him the note, which having read, he desired him to walk in and ordered supper. After supper he informed Alonzo that he was an English bookseller; that he should employ him as a clerk, and desired to know what wages he demanded. Alonzo replied that he should submit that to him, being unacquainted with the customary salary of clerks in that line of business. The gentleman told him that the matter should be arranged the next day. His name was Grafton.

The next morning Mr. Grafton took Alonzo into his bookstore, and gave him his instructions. His business was to sell the books to customers, and a list of prices was given him for that purpose. Mr. Grafton counted out twenty crowns and gave them to Alonzo: "You may want some necessaries," said he; "and as you have set no price on your services, we shall not differ about the wages, if you are attentive and faithful."

Alonzo gave his employer no reason to complain; nor had he any reason to be discontented with his situation. Mr. Grafton regularly advanced him twenty crowns at the commencement of every month, and boarded him in his family. Alonzo dressed in deep mourning. He sought no company; he found consolation only in solitude, if consolation it could be called.

As he was walking out early one morning, he discovered something lying in the street, which he at first supposed to be a small piece of silk: he took it

up and found it to be a curious wrought purse, containing a few guineas with some small pieces of silver, and something at the bottom carefully wrapped in a piece of paper; he unfolded it, and was thunderstruck at beholding an elegant miniature of Melissa! Her sweetly pensive features, her expressive countenance, her soul-enlivening eye! The shock was almost too powerful for his senses. Wildered in a maze of wonders, he knew not what to conjecture. Melissa's miniature found in the streets of Paris, after she had sometime been dead! He viewed it, he clasped it to his bosom.—“Such,” said he, “did she appear ere the corroding cankers of grief had blighted her heavenly charms! By what providential miracle am I possessed of the likeness, when the original is no more? What benevolent angel has taken pity on my sufferings, and conveyed to me this inestimable prize?”

But though he had thus become possessed of what he esteemed most valuable, what right had he to withhold it from the lawful owner, could the owner indeed be found? Perhaps the person who had lost it would part with it: perhaps the money contained in the purse was of more value to that person than the miniature. At any rate, justice required that he should endeavor to find to whom it belonged: this he might do by advertising, which he immediately concluded upon, resolving, should the owner appear, to purchase the miniature, if possibly within his power.

Passing into another street, he saw several handbills stuck up on the walls of houses: stepping up to one he read as follows:

“Lost, between the hours of nine and ten last evening in the *Rue de Loir*, a small silk purse, containing a few pieces of money, and a lady's minia-

‘ure. One hundred crowns will be given to the person who may have found it, and will restore it to the owner at the *American Hotel*, near the *Louvre*, Room No. 4.”

It was printed both in the French and English languages. By the reward here offered, Alonzo was convinced that the miniature belonged to some person who set a value upon it. Determined to explicate the mystery, he proceeded immediately to the place, found the room mentioned in the bill, and knocked at the door. A servant appeared, of whom Alonzo enquired for the lodger. The servant answered him in French, which Alonzo did not understand; he replied in his own language, but found it was unintelligible to the servant. A grave middle aged gentleman then came to the door from within the room and ended their jabbering at each other; he in the English language, desired Alonzo to walk in. It was an apartment neatly furnished; no person was therein except the gentleman and servant before mentioned, and a person who sat writing in a corner of the room, with his back towards them.

Alonzo informed the gentleman that he had called according to the direction in a bill of advertisement to enquire for the person who the preceding night, had lost a purse and miniature. The person who was writing had hitherto taken no notice of what passed; but at the sound of Alonzo’s voice, after he had entered the room, he started and turned about, and at the mention of the miniature, he rose up. Alonzo fixed his eyes upon him: they both stood for a few moments silent; for a short time their recollection was confused and imperfect, but the mists of doubt were soon dissipated. “Edgar!”—“Alonzo!” they alternately exclaimed. It was indeed Edgar, the early friend and fellow student of Alonzo—the



brother of Melissa! In an instant they were in each other's arms.

Edgar and Alonzo retired to a separate room. Edgar informed Alonzo that the news of Melissa's death reached him, by a letter from his father, while with the army; that he immediately procured a furlough, and visited his father, whom, with his mother, he found inconsolable distress. The letter which my uncle had written, said Edgar, announcing her death, mentioned with what patience and placidity she endured her malady, and with what calmness and resignation she met the approach of death. Her last moments, like her whole life, were unruffled and serene. She is in heaven Alonzo—she is an angel!"

—Swelling grief here choaked the utterance of Edgar; for some time he could proceed no farther, and Alonzo, with bursting bosom, mingled his tears.

"My father, resumed Edgar, bent on uniting her to Beauman or at least of preventing her union with you, had removed her to a desolate family mansion, and placed her under the care of an aunt. At that place, he either suspected, or really discovered that you had recourse to her while my aunt was absent on business. She was therefore no longer entrusted to the care of her aunt, but my father immediately formed and executed the plan of sending her to his brother in South Carolina, under pretence of restoring her to health by change of climate, as her health in reality had began rapidly to decay. There it was designed that Beauman should shortly follow her, with recommendations from my father to her uncle, urging him to use all possible means which might tend to persuade her to become the wife of Beauman. But change of climate only increased the load of sorrows, and she soon sunk beneath them. The letter mentioned nothing of her troubles: pos-

sibly my uncle's family knew nothing of them to them, probably,

——“ She never told her love,  
But sat like Patience on a monument  
Smiling at grief; while sad concealment,  
Like a worm in the bud,  
Fed on her damask cheek.

“ My father's distress was excessive: often did he accuse himself of barbarity, and he once earnestly expressed a wish that he had consented to her union with you. My father, I know, is parsimonious, but he sincerely loved his children. Inflexible as is his nature, the untimely death of a truly affectionate and only daughter will, I much fear precipitate him, and perhaps my mother also, to a speedy grave.

“As soon as my feelings would permit, I repaired to your father's, and made enquiry concerning you. I found your parents content in their humble state, except that your father had been ill, but was recovering. Of you they had heard nothing since your departure, and they deeply lamented your absence. And from Vincent I could obtain no farther information.

“ Sick of the world I returned to the army. An American consul was soon to sail for Holland:—I solicited and obtained the appointment of secretary. I hoped by visiting distant countries, in some measure to relieve my mind from the deep melancholy with which it was oppressed. We were to proceed first to Paris, where we have been a few days; to-morrow we are to depart for Holland. The consul is the man who introduced you into the room where you found me.

“ Last evening I lost the miniature which I suppose you to have found: the chain to which it was

suspended around my neck, had broken while I was walking the street, I carefully wrapped it in paper and deposited it in my purse, which I probably dropped on replacing it in my pocket, and did not discover the loss until this morning. I immediately made diligent search, but not finding it, I put up bills of advertisement. The likeness was taken in my sister's happiest days. After I had entered upon my professional studies in New York, I became acquainted with a miniature painter, who took my likeness. He afterwards went into the country, and as I found he was to pass near my father's, I engaged him to call there and take my sister's likeness also. We exchanged them soon after. It was dear to me, even while the original remained; but since she is gone it has become a most precious and valuable relique."

All the tender powers of Alonzo's soul were called into action by Edgar's recital. The "days of other years." The ghosts of sepulchred blessings, passed in painful review. Added to these the penurious condition of his parents, his father's recent illness, and his probable inability to procure the bread of his family, all tended more deeply to sink his spirits in the gulf of melancholy and misery. He however informed Edgar of all that had happened since they parted at Vincent's—respecting the old mansion—Melissa's extraordinary disappearance therefrom, the manner in which he was informed of her death, his departure from America, capture, escape, Beauman's death, arrival in France, and his finding the miniature. To Edgar as well as Alonzo, Melissa's sudden and unaccountable removal from the mansion was mysterious and inexplicable.

As Edgar was to depart early the next morning, they neither slept nor separated that night.

“If it were not for your reluctance to revisit your native country,” said Edgar, “I should urge you to accompany me to Holland, and thence return with me to America. Necessity, and duty require that I should not be long absent, as my parents want my assistance, and they are now childless.”

“Suffer me,” answered Alonzo, “to bury myself in this city for the present: should I ever again awake to real life, I will seek you out if you are on the earth;—but now, I can only be a companion to my miseries.”

The next morning as they were about to depart, Alonzo took Melissa’s miniature from his bosom, contemplated the picture a few moments with ardent emotion, and presented it to Edgar. “Keep it,” said Edgar, “it is thine. I bestow it upon thee as I would the original, had not death become the rival of thy love, and my affection.—Suffer not the sacred symbol too tenderly to renew your sorrows. How swiftly, Alonzo, does this restless life fleet away!—How soon shall we pass the barriers of terrestrial existence!—let us live worthy of ourselves, of our holy religion, of Melissa—Melissa, whom, when a few more suns have arisen and set, we shall meet in regions where all tears shall be eternally wiped from every eye.”

With what unspeakable sensibilities was it returned to Alonzo’s bosom! Edgar offered Alonzo pecuniary assistance, which the latter refused: “I am in business,” said he, “which brings me a decent support, and that is sufficient.” They agreed to write each other as frequently as possible, and then affectionately parted: Edgar sailed for Holland, and Alonzo returned to his business at Mr. Grafton’s.

Some time after this Alonzo received a message

from Dr. Franklin, requiring his attendance at his house, which summons he immediately obeyed. The doctor introduced him into his study, and after being seated, he earnestly viewed Alonzo for some time, and thus addressed him:

“Young man, your views, your resolutions, and your present conduct, are totally wrong. Disappointment, you say, has driven you from your native country. Disappointment in what? In obtaining the object on which you most doated. And suppose this object had been obtained, would your happiness have been complete? Your own reason, if you coolly consult it, will convince you of the contrary. Do you not remember when an infant, how you cried, and teased your nurse, or your parents, for a rattle, or some gay trinket?—Your whole soul was fixed upon the enchanting bauble; but when obtained, you soon cast it away, and sighed as earnestly for some other trifle, some new toy. Thus it is through life; the fancied value of an object ceases with the attainment; it becomes familiar, and its charm is lost.

“Was it the splendors of beauty which enraptured you? Sickness may, and age must destroy the symmetry of the most finished form—the brilliancy of the finest features. Was it the graces of the mind? I tell you, that by familiarity, these allurements are lost, and the mind, left vacant, turns to some other source to supply *vacuum*.

“Stripped of all their intrinsic value, how poor, how vain, and how worthless, are those things we name pleasures, and enjoyments!

“Besides, the attainment of your wishes might have been the death of your hopes. If my reasoning is correct, the ardency of your passion might have closed with the pursuit. An every day suit,

however rich and costly the texture, is soon worn threadbare. On your part, indifference would consequently succeed; on the part of your partner, disappointment, jealousy, and disgust. What might follow is needless for me to name;—your soul must shudder at the idea of conjugal infidelity!

“But admitting the most favorable consequences; turn the brightest side of the picture; admitting as much happiness as the connubial state will allow: now might your bosom have been wounded by the sickness and death of your children, or their disorderly and disobedient conduct! You must know also, that the warmth of youthful passion must soon cease, and it is merely a hazardous chance whether friendship will supply the absence of affection.

“After all, my young friend, it will be well for you to consider, whether the all-wise dispensing hand of Providence, has not directed this matter which you esteem so great an affliction, for your greatest good, and most essential advantage. And suffer me to tell you, that in all my observations on life, I have always found that those connections which were formed from inordinate passion, or what some would call pure affection, have been ever the most unhappy. Examining the varied circles of society, you will there see this axiom demonstrated: you will there see how few among the sentimentally refined are even apparently at ease; while those insusceptible of what you name tender attachments, or who receive them only as things of course, plod on through life, without even experiencing the least inconvenience from a want of the pleasures they are *supposed* to bestow, or the pains they sure to create. Beware, then, my son, beware of yielding the heart to the effeminacies of passion. Exquisite sensibilities are ever subject to exquisite inquietudes. Coun-

sel with correct reason, place entire dependence on the SUPREME, and the triumph of fortitude and resignation will be yours."

Franklin paused. His reasonings, however they convinced the understanding, could not heal the wounds of Alonzo's bosom.—In Melissa he looked for as much happiness as earth could afford, nor could he see any prospect in life which could repair the loss he had sustained.

"You have," resumed the philosopher, "deserted an indulgent father, a fond and tender mother, who must want your aid; now, perhaps, unable to toil for bread; now, possibly laid upon the bed of sickness, calling, in anguish or delirium, for the filial hand of their only son to administer relief."—All the parental feelings of Alonzo were now called into poignant action.—"You have left a country, bleeding at every pore, desolated by the ravages of war, wrecked by the thunders of battle, her heroes slain, her children captured. This country asks—she demands—you owe her your services: God and nature call upon you to defend her, while here you bury yourself in inglorious inactivity, pining for a hapless object, which, by all your lamentations, you can never bring back to the regions of mortality."

This aroused the patriotic flame in the bosom of Alonzo, and he voluntarily exclaimed, "I will go to the relief of my parents—I will fly to the defence of my country!"

"In former days," continued Franklin, "I was well acquainted with your father. As soon as you informed me of his failure, I wrote to my correspondent in England, and found, as I expected, that he had been overreached by swindlers and sharpers.—The pretended failure of the merchants with whom he was in company, was all a sham, as, also



the reported loss of the ships in their employ. The merchants fled to England: I have had them arrested, and they have given up their effects to much more than the amount of their debts. I have therefore procured a reversion of your father's losses, which, with costs, damages, and interests, when legally stated, he will receive of my agent in Philadelphia, to whom I shall transmit sufficient documents by you, and I shall advance you a sum equal to the expenses of your voyage, which will be liquidated by the said agent. A ship sails in a few days from Havre, for Savannah in Georgia: it would, indeed, be more convenient were she bound to some more northern port, but I know of no other which will sail for any part of America for some time. In her therefore I would advise you to take passage: it is not very material on what part of the continent you are landed; you will soon reach Philadelphia, transact your business, restore your father to his property, and be ready to serve your country."

If any thing could have given Alonzo consolation, it must have been this noble, generous and disinterested conduct of the great Franklin in favor of his father, by which his family were restored to ease and to independence. Ah! had this but happened in time to save a life far dearer than his own! The reflection was too painful. The idea, however, of giving joy to his aged parents, hastened his departure. Furnished with proper documents and credentials from Franklin, his benefactor, he took leave of him, with the warmest expressions of gratitude, as also of Mr. Grafton, and sailed for Savannah, where he arrived in about eight weeks.

Intent on his purpose, he immediately purchased a carriage and proceeded on for Philadelphia. As he approached Charleston, his bosom swelled with

mournful recollections. He arrived in that city in the afternoon, and at evening he walked out, and entered a little ale house, which stood near the large burial ground. An elderly woman and two small children were the only persons in the house, except himself. After calling for a pint of ale, he enquired of the old lady, if Col. D——, (Melissa's uncle) did not live near the city. She informed him that he resided about a mile from the town, where he had an elegant seat, and that he was very rich.

"Was there not a young lady," asked Alonzo, "who died there about eighteen months ago?"

"La me!" said she, "did you know her? Yes; and a sweeter or more handsome lady the sun never shined on. And then she was so good, so patient in her sickness.—Poor, dear distressed girl, she pined away to skin and bones before she died. She was not Col. D——'s daughter, only somehow related: she came here in hopes that a change of air might do her good. She came from—la me! I cannot think of the name of the place; it is a crabbed name though."

"Connecticut, was it not?" said Alonzo.

"O yes, that was it," replied she. "Dear me! then you knew her, did you, sir?—Well, we have not her like left in Charleston, that we han't;—and then there was such ado at her funeral; five hundred people, I dare say, with eight young ladies for pall-bearers, all dressed in white, with black ribbons, and all the bells tolling."

"Where was she buried?" enquired Alonzo.

"In the church-yard right before our door," she answered. "My husband is the sexton; he put up ner large white marble tomb-stones;—they are the largest and whitest in the whole burying-ground,

and so, indeed, they ought to be, for never was there a person who deserved them more."

Tired with the old woman's garrulity, and with a bosom bursting with anguish, Alonzo paid for his ale without drinking it, bade her good night and slowly proceeded to the church-yard. The moon, in full lustre, shone with solemn, silvery ray, on the sacred piles, and funeral monuments of the sacred dead the wind murmured mournfully among the weeping willows; a solitary nightingale\* sang plaintively in the distant forest; and a whippoorwill, Melissa's favorite bird, whistled near the portico of the church. The large white tomb-stones soon caught the eye of Alonzo. He approached them with tremulous step, and with feelings too agitated for description. On the head-stone he read as follows:

## SACRED

To the Momory of inestimable departed Worth;

To unrivalled Excellence and Virtue.

MISS MELISSA D——,

Whose remains are deposited here, and  
whose ethereal part became a seraph,

October 26, 1776.

In the 18th year of her age.

Alonzo bent, kneeled, he prostrated himself, he clasped the green turf which enclosed her grave, he watered it with his tears, he warmed it with his sighs. "Where art thou, bright beam of heavenly light!" he said. "Come to my troubled soul, blessed spirit! Come, holy shade! come in all thy native loveliness, and cheer the bosom of wretchedness by thy grief dispersing smile! On the ray of yon eve-

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\* This bird, though not an inhabitant of the northern states, is frequently to be met with in Georgia and the Carolinas.

ning star descend. One moment leave the celestial regions of glory—leave, one moment, thy sister beatitudes, and glide, in entrancing beauty, before me! wave, benignly wave, thy white hand, and assuage the anguish of despairing sorrow! Alas! in vain my invocation! A curtain, impenetrable, is drawn betwixt me and thee, only to be disclosed by the dissolution of nature.”

He arose and walked away: suddenly he stopped. “Yet,” said he, “if spirits departed lose not the power of recollection;—if they have knowledge of present events on earth, Melissa cannot have forgotten me—she must pity me.” He returned to the grave; he took her miniature from his bosom; he held it up, and earnestly viewed it by the moon’s pale ray.

“Ah, Franklin!” he exclaimed, “how tenderly does she beam her lovely eye upon me! How often have I drank delicious ecstasy from the delicacy of those unrivalled charms! How often have they taught me to anticipate superlative and uninterrupted bliss! Mistaken and delusive hope! [*returning the miniature to his bosom.*] Vain and presumptuous assurance. Then [*pointing to the grave*] there behold how my dearest wishes, my fondest expectations are realized!——Hallowed turf! lie lightly on her bosom!—Sacred willows! sprinkle the dews gently over her grave, while the mourning breezes sigh sadly amid your branches! Here may the “widowed wild rose love to bloom!” Here may the first placid beams of morning delight to linger; from hence, the evening ray reluctantly withdraw!—And when the final trump shall renovate and arouse the sleeping saint;—when on “buoyant step” she soars to glory, nay our meeting spirits join in beatific

transport! May my enraptured ear catch the first holy whispers of her consecrated lips."

Alonzo having thus poured out the effusions of an overcharged heart, pensively returned to the inn, which he entered and seated himself in the common room, in deep contemplation. As usual at public inns, a number of people were in the room, among whom were several officers of the American army. Alonzo was too deeply absorbed in melancholy reflection, to notice passing incidents, until a young officer came, seated himself by him, and entered into conversation respecting the events of the war. He appeared to be about Alonzo's age; his person was interesting, his manners sprightly, his observations correct.—Alonzo was, in some degree, aroused from his abstractedness;—the manners of the stranger pleased him. His frankness, his ease, his understanding, his urbanity, void of vanity, or sophistication, sympathetically caught the feelings of Alonzo, and he even felt a sort of solemn regret when the stranger departed. He soon retired to bed, determining to proceed early the next morning.

He arose about daylight; the horizon was overcast, and it had begun to rain, which before sunrise had increased to a violent storm. He found therefore that he must content himself to stay until it was over, which did not happen till near night and too late to pursue his journey. He was informed by the inn-keeper, that the theatre, which had been closed since the commencement of the war, was to be opened that night only, with the tragedy of *Gustavus*, and close with a representation of Burgoyne's capture, and some other recent events of the American war. To "wing the hours with swifter speed," Alonzo determined to go to the theatre, and at the hour appointed he repaired thither

As he was proceeding to take his seat, he passed the box where sat the young officer, whose manners had so prepossessed him the preceding evening at the inn. He immediately arose: they exchanged salutations, and Alonzo walked on and took his seat. The evening was warm, and the house exceedingly crowded. After the tragedy was through, and before the after-piece commenced, the young officer came to Alonzo's box, and made some remarks on the merit of the actors. While they were discoursing, a bustle took place in one part of the house, and several people gathered around a box, at a little distance from them. The officer turned, left Alonzo, and hastened to the place. To the general inquiry, "*what's the matter?*" it was answered, that "*a lady had fainted.*" She was led out, and the tumult subsided.

As soon as the after-piece was closed, Alonzo returned to the inn. As he passed along he cast his eyes toward the church-yard, where laid the "*with-er'd blessings of his richest joys.*" Affection, passion, inclination, urged him to go and breathe a farewell sigh, to drop a final tear over the grave of Melissa. Discretion, reason, wisdom forbade it—*forbade that he re-pierce the ten thousand wounds of his bosom, by the acute revival of unavailing sorrows, he hurried to his chamber.*

As he prepared to retire to rest, he saw a book lying on the table near his bed. On taking it up he found it to be *Young's Night Thoughts*, a book which, in happier days, had been the solace of many a gloomy, many a lucid hour. He took it up and the first lines he cast his eyes upon were the following:

"Song, beauty, love, virtue, joy: this group  
Of bright ideas—flowers of Paradise,

As yet a forfeit! in one blaze we bind.  
Kneel, and present it to the skies; as all  
We guess of heaven! And these were all her own.  
And she was mine, and I was—was most blest  
—Like blossom'd trees, o'erturned by vernal storm,  
Lovely in death the beauteous ruin lay—  
Ye that e'er lost an angel, pity me."

His tears fell fast upon the book! He replaced it and flung himself into bed. Sleep was far from him; he closed not his eyes till the portals of light were unbarred in the east, when he fell into interrupted slumbers.

When he awoke, the morning was considerably advanced. He arose. One consolation was yet left—to see his parents happy. He went down to order his carriage; his favorite stranger, the young officer, was in waiting, and requested a private interview. They immediately retired to a separate room, when the stranger thus addressed Alonzo:

"From our short acquaintance, you may sir, consider it singular that I should attempt to scrutinize your private concerns, and more extraordinary you may esteem it, when I inform you of my reasons for so doing. Judging, however, from appearances, I have no doubt of your candor. If my questions should be deemed improper, you will tell me so."

Alonzo assured him he would treat him candidly. "This I believe," said the young officer; "I take the liberty therefore to ask if you are an American?"—"I am," answered Alonzo. "I presume," said the stranger—"the question is a delicate one—I presume your family is respectable?" "Sacredly so," replied Alonzo. "Are you married, sir?" "I am not, and have ever been single." "Have you any prospects of connecting in marriage?" "I



have not, sir." "I may then safely proceed," said the stranger; "I trust you will hear me attentively; you will judge maturely; you will decide correctly, and I am confident that you will answer me sincerely.

"A young lady of this city, with whom I am well acquainted, and to whom, indeed, I am distantly related, whose father is affluent, whose connections are eminently respectable, whose manners are engaging, whose mind is virtue, whose elegance of form and personal beauty defy competition, is the cause, sir, of this mission.—Early introduced into the higher walks of life, she has passed the rounds of fashionable company; numberless suitors sighed for her hand, whom she complaisantly dismissed without disoblighing, as her heart had not yet been touched by the tender passion of love. Surprising as it may, however, seem, it is now about six months since she saw in her dream the youth who possessed the power to inspire her with this passion. In her dream she saw a young gentleman whose interesting manners and appearance, impressed her so deeply that she found she must be unhappy without him. She thought it was in a mixed company she saw him, but that she could not get an opportunity to speak to him. It seemed that if she could but speak to him, all difficulties would at once be removed.—At length he approached her, and just as he was about to address her, she awoke.

"This extraordinary dream she had communicated to several of her acquaintance.—Confident that she should some time or other behold the real person whose semblance she had seen in her dream, she has never since been perfectly at ease in her mind. Her father who has but two children, one beside herself, being dotingly fond of her, has prom-

ised that if ever she meets this unknown stranger, he will not oppose their union, provided he is respectable, and that, if worthy of her hand he will make him independent.

On my return from the inn the evening I first saw you, I told my sister—I beg pardon, sir—I was wandering from my subject—after I first met you at the inn, I fell in company with the lady, and in a rallying way told her that I had seen her *nivisible beau*, as we used to call the gentleman of the dream. I superficially described your person and descanted a little on the embellishments of your mind. She listened with some curiosity and attention; but I had so often jested with her in this manner, that she thought little of it. At the play last night, I had just been speaking to her when I came to your box; her eyes followed me, but no sooner had they rested on you, than she fainted! This was the cause of my leaving you so abruptly, and not returning. We conveyed her home, when she informed me that you was the person she had seen in her dream!

“To me only, she preferred disclosing the circumstance at present, for reasons which must be obvious to your understanding.—Even her father and mother are not informed of it, and should my mission prove unsuccessful, none except you, sir, she and myself, I hope and trust, will ever know any thing of the matter.

“Now, sir, it is necessary farther to explain. As singular as the circumstances which I have related may appear to you, to me they must appear as strange. One valuable purpose is, however, answered thereby; it will exclude the imputation of capriciousness—the freakish whim of *love at first sight*, which exists only in novels and romances. You, sir, are young, unmarried, unaffianced, your affections

free: such is the condition of the lady. She inquires not into the state of your property. she asks not riches:—if she obtains the object of her choice, on him, as I have told you, will her father bestow affluence.——Whatever, sir, may be your pretensions to eminence, and they may be many, the lady is not your inferior. Her education also is such as would do honor to a gentleman of taste.

“I will not extend my remarks; you perfectly understand me—what answer shall I return?”

Alonzo sighed: for a few moments he was silent.

“Perhaps, said the stranger, you may consider the *mode* of this message as bearing the appearance of indecorum. If so, I presume, on reviewing the incidents which to—which enforced it, as the most safe, the *only* means of sure communication, you will change your opinion. Probably you would not wish finally to decide until you have visited the lady. This was my expectation, and I am, therefore, ready to introduce you to her presence.”

“No, sir,” said Alonzo, “so far from considering the message indecorous, I esteem it a peculiar honor, both as respects the lady and yourself. Nor is it necessary that I should visit the lady, to confirm the truth of what you have related. You will not, sir, receive it as an adulatory compliment, when I say, that although our acquaintance is short, yet my confidence in your integrity is such as to require no corroborating facts to establish your declaration. But, sir, there are obstacles—insuperable obstacles, to the execution of the measures you would propose.

“Your frankness to me, demands, on my part, equal candor. I assured you that I was unmarried, and had no prospect of entering into matrimonial engagements; this is indeed the fact: but it is also true that my affections—my first, my earliest affec-

tions were engaged, unalienably engaged, to an object which is now no more. Perhaps you may esteem it singular; perhaps you will consider it enthusiasm; but, sir, it is impossible that my heart should admit a second and similar impression."

The stranger paused. "Recent disappointments of this nature," he replied, "commonly leave the mind under such gloomy influences. Time, however, the soother of severest woes, will, though slowly, yet surely, disperse the clouds of anguish, and the rays of comfort and consolation will beam upon the soul. I wish not to be considered importunate, but the day may arrive when you may change your present determination, and then will you not regret that you refused so advantageous an overture?"

"That day will never arrive, sir," answered Alonzo: "I have had time for deliberate reflection since the melancholy event took place. I have experienced a sufficient change of objects and country; the effect is the same. The wound is still recent, and so it will ever remain: indeed I cannot wish it otherwise. There is a rich and sacred solemnity in my sorrows, sir, which I would not exchange for the most splendid acquirements of wealth, or the most dignified titles of fame."

The young officer sat for some time silent. "Well sir," he said, "since it is thus, seeing that these things are so, I will urge you no farther. You will pardon me respecting the part I have taken in this business, since it was with the purest designs. May consolation, comfort, and happiness, yet be yours."

"To you and your fair friend," said Alonzo, "I consider myself under the highest obligations. The gratitude I feel, I can but feebly express. Believe me

sir, when I tell you, (and it is all I can say,) that your ingenuous conduct has left impressions in my bosom which can never be obliterated."

The stranger held out his hand, which Alonzo ardently grasped. They were silent, but their eyes spoke sympathy, and they parted.

Alonzo immediately prepared, and was soon ready to depart. As he was stepping into his carriage, he saw the young officer returning. As he came up, "I must detain you a few moments longer," he said, "and I will give you no farther trouble. You will recollect that the lady about whom I have so much teased you, when she became acquainted with you in her dream, believed that if she could speak with you, all difficulties would be removed. Conscious that this may be the case, (for with all her accomplishments she is a little superstitious,) she desires to see you. You have nothing to fear, sir; she would not for the world yield you her hand, unless in return you could give her your heart. Nor was she willing you should know that she made this request, but wished me to introduce you, as it were by stratagem. Confident, however, that you would thus far yield to the caprice of a lady, I chose to tell you the truth. She resides near by, and it will not hinder you long."

"It is capriciousness in the extreme," thought Alonzo; but he told the stranger he would accompany him—who immediately stepped into the carriage, and they drove, by his direction, to an elegant house in a street at a little distance, and alighted. As they entered the house, a servant handed the stranger a note, which he hastily looked over: "Tell the gentleman I will wait on him in a moment," said he to the servant, who instantly withdrew. Turning to Alonzo, "a person is in waiting," said

he, "on urgent business; excuse me, therefore, if it is with reluctance; I retire a few moments, after I have announced you; I will soon again be with you."

They then ascended a flight of stairs: the stranger opened the door of a chamber—"The gentleman I mentioned to you, madam," he said. Alonzo entered; the stranger closed the door and retired. The lady was sitting by a window at the lower end of the room, but arose as Alonzo was announced. She was dressed in sky-blue silk, embroidered with spangled lace; a gemmed *tiara* gathered her hair, from which was suspended a green veil, according to the mode of those times; a silken girdle, with diamond clasps, surrounded her waist, and a brilliant sparkled upon her bosom. The stranger's description was not exaggerated, thought Alonzo; for, except one, I have never seen a more elegant figure: and he almost wished the veil removed, that he might behold her features.

"You will please to be seated, sir," she said, "I know not how—I feel an inconceivable diffidence in making an excuse for the inconveniences my silly caprices have given you."

Enchanting melody was in her voice! Alonzo knew not why, but it thrilled his bosom, electrified his soul, and vibrated every nerve of his heart. Confused and hurried sensations, melancholy, yet pleasing; transporting as the recurrence of youthful joys, enrapturing as dreams of early childhood, passed in rapid succession over his imagination!

She advanced towards him and turned aside her veil. Her eyes were suffused, and tears streamed down her cheeks,—Alonzo started—his whole frame shook—he gasped for breath!—"Melissa!" he con-

vulsively exclaimed,—God of infinite wonders, it is Melissa!”

Again will the incidents of our history produce a pause. Our sentimental readers will experience a recurrence of sympathetic sensibilities, and will attend more eagerly to the final scene of our drama. —“Melissa alive!” may they say—“impossible! Did not Alonzo see her death in the public prints? Did not her cousin at New London inform him of the circumstances, and was he not in mourning? Did not the dying Beauman confirm the melancholy fact? And was not the unquestionable testimony of her brother Edgar sufficient to seal the truth of all this? Did not the sexton’s wife who knew not Alonzo corroborate it? And did not Alonzo finally read her name, her age, and the time of her death, on her tomb-stone, which exactly accorded with the publication of her death in the papers, and his own knowledge of her age? And is not this sufficient to prove, clearly and incontestibly prove, that she is dead? And yet here she is again, in all her primitive beauty and splendor! No, this surely can never be. However the author may succeed in his description, in painting reanimated nature, he is no magician, or if he is, he cannot raise the dead.

“Melissa has long since mouldered into dust, and he has raised up some female Martin Guerre, or Thomas Hoag—some person, from whose near resemblance to the deceased, he thinks to impose upon us and upon Alonzo also, for Melissa. But it will not do; it must be the identical Melissa herself, or it might as well be her likeness in a marble statue. What! can Alonzo realize the delicacies, the tenderness, the blandishments of Melissa in another? Can her substitute point him to the rock on New London beach, the bower of her favorite hill, or so feelingly



describe the charms of nature? Can he, indeed, find in her representative those alluring graces, that pensive sweetness, those unrivalled virtues and matchless worth which he found in Melissa, and which attracted, fixed and secured the youngest affections of his soul? Impossible!—Or could the author even make it out that Alonzo was deceived by a person so nearly resembling Melissa that he could not distinguish the difference, yet to his readers he must unveil the deception, and, of course, the story will end in disappointment; it will leave an unpleasant and disagreeable impression on the mind of the reader, which in novel writing is certainly wrong. It is proved, as clearly as facts can prove, that he has suffered Melissa to die; and since she is dead, it is totally beyond his power to bring her to life—and so his history is intrinsically *good for nothing.*”

Be not quite so hasty, my zealous censor. Did we not tell you that we were detailing facts? Shall we disguise or discolour truth to please *your* taste? Have we not told you that disappointments are the lot of life? Have we not, according to the advice of the moralist, led Alonzo to the temple of philosophy, the shrine of reason, and the sanctuary of religion? If all these fail—if in these Alonzo cannot find a balsam sufficient to heal his wounded bosom; then if, in despite of graves and tomb-stones, Melissa will come to his relief—will pour the balm of consolation over his anguished soul, cynical critic, can the author help it?

It was indeed Melissa, the identical Melissa, whom Alonzo ascended a tree to catch a last glimpse of, as she walked up the avenue to the old mansion, after they had parted at the draw-bridge, on the morning of the day when she was so mysteriously removed.

‘Melissa!’——‘Alonzo!’——were all they could articulate: and frown not, my fair readers, if we tell you that she was instantly in his arms, while he pressed his ardent lips to her glowing cheek.

Sneer not, ye callous hearted insensibles, ye fastidious prudes, if we inform you that their tears fell in one intermingling shower, that their sighs wafted in one blended breeze.

The sudden opening of the door, aroused them to a sense of their improper situation; for who but must consider it improper to find a young lady locked in the arms of a gentleman to whom she had just been introduced? The opening of the door, therefore, caused them quickly to change their position: not so hastily, however, but that the young officer who then entered the room had a glimpse of their situation.——“Aha!” said he, “have I caught you? Is my philosophic Plato so soon metamorphosed to a *bon ton* enamorado? But a few hours ago, sir, and you were proof against the whole arena of beauty, and all the artillery of the graces; but no sooner are you for one moment *tete a tete* with a fashionable belle, than your heroism and your resolutions are vanquished, your former ties dissolved and your deceased charmer totally forgotten or neglected, by the virtue of a single glance. Well, so it is: *Amor vincit omnia* is my motto; to thee all conquering beauty, our firmest determinations must bow. I cannot censure you for discovering, though late, that one living object is really of more intrinsic value than two dead ones. Indeed, sir, I cannot but applaud your determination.”

“The laws of honor,” said Alonzo, “smiling, compel me to submit to become the subject of your raillery and deception; I am in your power.”

“I acknowledge,” said the officer, “that I have

a little deceived you, my story was fiction founded on truth—the novel style: but for the deceptive part, you may thank your little gipsy of a nymph there, pointing to Melissa; she planned and I executed.”

“How ready you gentlemen are,” replied Melissa, “when accused of impropriety to cast the blame on the defenceless! So it was with our first parents, and so it is still. But you must remember that Alonzo is yet to hear my story; there, sir, I have the advantage of you.”

“Then I confess,” said he, looking at Alonzo, “you will be too hard for me, and so I will say no more about it.”

Melissa then introduced the young officer to Alonzo, by the appellation of Capt. Wilmot. “He is the son of my deceased uncle,” said she, “a cousin to whom I am much indebted, as you shall hereafter know.”

A coach drove up to the door, which Melissa informed Alonzo was her uncle’s and was sent to convey Alfred and her home. “You will have no objection to breakfast with me at my uncle’s,” said Alfred, “if it be only to keep our cousin Melissa in countenance.”

Alonzo did not hesitate to accept the invitation. They immediately therefore entered the coach, a servant took care of Alonzo’s carriage, and they drove to the seat of Col. D——, who, with his family, received Alonzo with much friendship and politeness. Alfred had apprized them of Alonzo’s arrival in town, and of course he was expected.

Col. D—— was about fifty years old, his manners were majestically grave and commanding, yet polished and polite. His family consisted of an amiable wife considerably younger than himself, and three children; the eldest son, about ten years of age, and

two daughters, one seven, the other four years old. Harmony and cheerfulness reigned in his family, which diffused tranquility and ease to its members and its guests.

It was agreed that Alonzo should pass a few days at the house of Melissa's uncle when Melissa was to accompany him to Connecticut. Alfred, with some other officers, was recruiting for the army, where his regiment then lay, and which he was shortly to join. He could not, therefore, be constantly at his uncle's, though he was principally there while Alonzo staid: but being absent the day after his arrival, Melissa and Alonzo having retired to a room separate from the family, she gave him the following account of what happened after they had parted at the old mansion.

"The morning after you left me," she said, "John came to the bridge and called to be let in:—I immediately went to the gate, opened it, and let down the bridge. John informed me that my aunt had suddenly and unexpectedly arrived that morning in company with a strange gentleman, and that he had come for the keys, as my aunt was to visit the mansion that day. I strove to persuade John to leave the keys in my possession, and that I would make all easy with my aunt when she arrived. This, though with much reluctance, he at length consented to, and departed. Soon after this my aunt came, and without much ceremony demanded the keys, insinuating that I had obtained them from John by imposition, and for the basest purposes. This aroused me to indignation, and I answered by informing her that whatever purposes the persecution and cruelty of my family had compelled me to adopt, my conscience, under present circumstances approved them, and I refused to give her the keys. She then order

ed me to prepare to leave the mansion, and accompany her to her residence at the house of John. I told her that I had been placed there by my father, and should not consent to a removal unless by his express orders. She then left me, intimating that she would soon let me know that her authority was not to be thus trampled upon with impunity.

"I immediately raised the bridge, and made fast the gate, determining, on no considerations, to suffer it to be opened until evening. The day passed away without any occurrence worthy of note, and as soon as it was dark, I went, opened the gate, and cautiously let down the bridge. I then returned to the mansion, and placed the candle, as we had concerted, at the window. Shortly after I heard a carriage roll over the bridge and proceed up the avenue.—My heart fluttered; I wished—I hardly knew what I did wish; but I feared I was about to act improperly, as I had no other idea but that it was you, Alonzo, who was approaching. The carriage stopped near the door of the mansion; a footstep ascended the stairs. Judge of my surprise and agitation, when my father entered the chamber! A maid and two men servants followed him. He directed me to make immediate preparations for leaving the mansion—which command, with the assistance of the servants, I obeyed with a heart too full for utterance.

"As soon as I was ready, we entered the carriage which drove rapidly away. As we passed out of the gate, I looked back to the mansion, and saw the light of the candle which I had forgotten to remove, streaming from the window and it was by an extraordinary effort that I prevented myself from fainting.

"The carriage drove, as near as I could judge, about ten miles, when we stopped at an inn for the

night, except my father, who returned home on horseback, leaving me at the inn in company with the servants, where the carriage also remained. The maid was a person who had been attached to me from my infancy. I asked her whether she could explain these mysterious proceedings.

"All I know, Miss I will tell you," said she. "Your father received a letter to-day from your aunt, which put him in a terrible flutter: he immediately ordered his carriage and directed us to attend him. He met your aunt at a tavern somewhere away back and she told him that the gentleman who used to come to our house so much once, had contrived to carry you off from the place where you lived with her; so your father concluded to send you to your uncle's in Carolina, and said I must go with you. And to tell you the truth, Miss, I was not displeased with it: for your father has grown so sour of late that we have but little peace in the house."

"By this I found that my fate was fixed, and I gave myself up for some time to unavailing sorrow. The maid informed me that my mother was well, which was one sweet consolation among my many troubles; but she knew nothing of my father's late conduct.

"The next morning we proceeded, and I was hurried on by rapid stages to the Chesapeak, where, with the maid and one man servant, I was put on board a packet for Charleston, at which place we arrived in due time.

"My uncle and his family received me with much tenderness: the servant delivered a package of letters to my uncle from my father. The carriage with one servant (the driver) had returned from the Chesapeak to Connecticut.

"My father had but one brother and two sisters,

of which my unclé here is the youngest. One of my aunts, the old maid, who was my protectress at the old mansion, you have seen at my father's. The other was the mother of Alfred:—she married very young, to a gentleman in Hartford, of the name of Wilmot, who fell before the walls of Louisburg in the old French war. My aunt did not long survive him;—her health, which had been for sometime declining, received so serious a shock by this catastrophe, that she died a few months after the melancholy tidings arrived, leaving Alfred their only child then an infant, to the protection of his relations, who as soon as he arrived at a suitable age, placed him at school.

“ My grandfather, who had the principal management of Mr. Wilmot's estate, sent my uncle, who was then young and unmarried to Hartford, for the purpose of transacting the necessary business. Here he became acquainted with a young lady, eminent for beauty and loveliness, but without fortune, the daughter of a poor mechanic. As soon as my grandfather was informed of this attachment, he, in a very peremptory manner, ordered my uncle to break off the connection on pain of his highest displeasure. But such is the force of early impressions, (Melissa sighed) that my uncle found it impossible to submit to these firm injunctions; a clandestine marriage ensued, and my grandfather's malediction in consequence. The union was however, soon dissolved; my uncle's wife died in about twelve months after their marriage, and soon after the birth of the first child, which was a daughter. Inconsolable and comfortless, my uncle put the child to nurse, and travelled to the south. After wandering about for some time, he took up his residence in Charleston, where he amassed a splendid fortune. He finally



married to an amiable woman, whose tenderness, though it did not entirely remove, yet greatly alleviated the pangs of early sorrow; and this, added to the little blandishments of a young family, fixed him in a state of more contentedness than he once ever expected to see.

"His daughter by his first wife, when she became of proper age, was sent to a respectable boarding-school in Boston, where she remained until within about two years before I came here.

"Alfred was educated at Harvard College: as soon as he had graduated, he came here on my uncle's request, and has since remained in his family.

"Soon after I arrived here; my uncle came into my chamber one day, "Melissa," said he, "I find by your father's letters that he considers you have formed an improper connection. I wish you to give me a true statement of the matter, and if any thing can be done to reconcile you to your father, you may depend upon my assistance. I have seen some troubles in that way myself, in my early days; perhaps my council may be of some service."

"I immediately gave a correct account of every particular circumstance, from the time of my first acquaintance with you until my arrival at this house. He sat some time silent, and then told me that my father, he believed had drawn the worst side of the picture; and that he had urged him to exert every means in his power to reclaim me to obedience: That Beauman was to follow me in a few months, and that, if I still refuse to yield him my hand, my father positively and solemnly declared that he would discard me forever, and strenuously enjoined it upon him to do the same. "I well know my brother's temper," continued my uncle: "the case is difficult,

but something must be done. I will immediately write to your father, desiring him not to proceed too rashly; in the mean time we must consider what measures to pursue. You must not, my niece, you must not be sacrificed." So saying, he left me highly consoled that, instead of a tyrant, I had found a friend in my new protector.

"Alfred was made acquainted with my affair, and many were the plans projected for my benefit, and abandoned as indefeasible, till an event happened which called forth all the fortitude of my uncle to support it, and operated in the end to free me from persecution.

"My uncle's daughter, by his first wife, was of a very delicate and sickly constitution, and her health evidently decreasing.—After she came to this place, she was sent to a village on one of the high hills of Pedee, where she remained a considerable time;—she then went to one of the inland towns in North Carolina from whence she had but just returned with Alfred when I arrived.—Afterwards I accompanied her to Georgetown, and other places, attended by her father, so that she was little more known in Charleston than myself." But all answered no purpose to the restoration of her health; a confirmed hectic carried her off in the bloom of youth.

"I was but a few months older than she; her name was Melissa, a name which a pious grandmother had borne, and was therefore retained in the family. Our similarity of age, and in some measure of appearance, our being so little known in Charleston, and our names being the same, suggested to Alfred the idea of imposing on my father, by passing off my cousin's death as my own.—This would, at least, deter Beauman from prosecuting his intended journey to Charleston; it would also give time for

farther deliberation, and might so operate on my father's feelings, as to soften that obduracy of temper, which deeply disquieted himself and others, and thus finally be productive of happily effecting the designed purpose.

"My uncle was too deeply overwhelmed in grief to be particularly consulted on this plan. He however entrusted Alfred to act with full powers, and to use his name for my interest if necessary. Alfred therefore procured a publication as of my death, in the Connecticut papers, particularly at New-London the native place of Beauman. In Charleston it was generally supposed that it was the niece, and not the daughter of Col. D——, who had died. This imposition was likewise practiced upon the sexton, who keeps the register of deaths.\* Alfred then wrote a letter to my father, in my uncle's name, stating the particulars of my cousin's death and applying them to me. The epitaph on her tomb-stone was likewise so devised that it would with equal propriety apply either to her or to me.

"To undeceive you, Alonzo," continued Melissa, "was the next object. I consulted with Alfred how this should be done. 'My sister,' he said, (in our private circles he always called me by the tender name of sister,) I am determined to see you happy before I relinquish the business I have undertaken: letters are a precarious mode of communication; I will make a journey to Connecticut, find out Alonzo, visit your friends and see how the plan operates. I am known to your father, who has ever treated me as a relative. I will return as speedily as possible, and we shall then know what measures are best next to pursue."

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\* This was formerly the case.

"I requested him to unfold the deception to my mother, and, if he found it expedient, to Vincent and Mr. Simpson, in whose friendship and fidelity I was sure he might safely confide.

"He soon departed, and returned in about two months. He found my father and mother in extreme distress on account of my supposed death: my mother's grief had brought her on the bed of sickness; but when Alfred had undeceived her she rapidly revived.—My father told Alfred that he seriously regretted opposing my inclinations, and that, were it possible he could retrace the steps he had taken, he should conduct in a very different manner, as he was not only deprived of me, but Edgar also, who had gone to Holland in an official capacity, soon after receiving the tidings of my death. 'I am now childless,' said my father in tears. Alfred's feelings were moved, and could he then have found you, he would have told my father the truth; but lest he should relapse from present determinations, he considered it his duty still, with him, to continue the deception.

"On enquiring at your father's, at Vincent's, and at Mr. Simpson's, he could learn nothing of you, except that you had gone to New London, judging possibly that you would find me there. Alfred therefore determined to proceed to that place immediately. He then confidently unfolded to your father, Vincent, and Mr. Simpson, the scheme, desiring that if you returned you would proceed immediately to Charleston.—My father was still to be kept in ignorance.

"Alfred proceeded immediately to New-London: from my cousin there he was informed of your interview with him; but from whence you then came, or where you went, he knew not; and after making

the strictest enquiry, he could hear nothing more of you. By a vessel in that port, bound directly for Holland, he wrote an account of the whole affair to Edgar, mentioning his unsuccessful search to find you; and returned to Charleston.

“ Alfred learnt from my friends the circumstances which occasioned my sudden removal from the old mansion. The morning you left me you was discovered by my aunt, who was passing the road in a chair with a gentleman, whom she had then but recently become acquainted with. My aunt knew you. They immediately drove to John’s hut. On finding that John had left the keys with me, she sent him for them; and on my refusing to give them up, she came herself, as I have before related; and as she succeeded no better than John, she returned, dispatched a message to my father, informing him of the circumstances, and her suspicions of your having been to the mansion, and that, from my having possession of the keys and refusing to yield them up, there was little doubt but that we had formed a plan for my escape.

“ Alarmed at this information, my father immediately ordered his carriage, drove to the mansion, and removed me, as I have before informed you.

“ I ought to have told you, that the maid and man servant who attended me to Charleston, not liking the country, and growing sickly, were sent back by my uncle, after they had been there about two months.”

Alonzo found by this narrative that John had deceived him, when he made his inquiries of him concerning his knowledge of Melissa’s removal. But this was not surprising: John was tenant to Melissa’s aunt, and subservient to all her views;—she had undoubtedly given him instructions how to act.

"But who was the strange gentleman with your aunt?" inquired Alonzo. "This I will also tell you answered Melissa, tho' it unfolds a tale which reflects no great honor to my family.

"Hamblin was the name which this man assumed: he said he had been an eminent merchant in New York, and had left it about the time it was taken by the British. He lodged at an inn where my aunt frequently stopped when she was out collecting her rents, where he first introduced himself to her acquaintance, and ingratiated himself into her favor by art and insidiousness. He accompanied her on her visits to her tenants, and assisted her in collecting her rents. He told her, that when the war came on, he had turned his effects into money, which he had with him, and was now in pursuit of some country place where he might purchase a residence to remain during the war. To cut the story as short as possible, he initiated himself so far in my aunt's favor that she accepted his hand, and contrary to my father's opinion, she married him, and he soon after persuaded her to sell her property, under pretence of removing to some populous town, and living in style. Her property, however, was no sooner sold (which my father bought for ready cash, at a low price) than he found means to realize the money, and absconded.

"It was afterwards found that his real name was Brenton; that he had a wife and family in Virginia in indigent circumstances, where he had spent an ample fortune, left him by his father, in debauchery, and involved himself deeply in debt. He had scarcely time to get off with the booty he swindled from my aunt, when his creditors from Virginia were at his heels. He fled to the British at New York, where he rioted for a few months, was finally statu

bed by a soldier in a fracas, and died the next day. He was about thirty-five years old.

"All these troubles bore so heavily upon my aunt, that she went into a decline, and died about six months ago.

"After Alfred returned from Connecticut, he wrote frequently to Vincent and Mr. Simpson, but could obtain no intelligence concerning you. It would be needless Alonzo, to describe my conjectures, my anxieties, my feelings! The death of my cousin and aunt had kept me in crape until, at the instance of Alfred, I put it off yesterday morning at my uncle's house, which Alfred had proposed for the scene of action, after he had discovered the cause my fainting at the theatre. I did not readily come into Alfred's plan to deceive you: 'Suffer me,' he said, 'to try the constancy of your *Leander*;—I doubt whether he would swim the Hellespont for you.' This aroused my pride and confidence, and I permitted him to proceed."

Alonzo then gave Melissa a minute account of all that happened to him from the time of their parting at the old mansion until he met with her the day before. At the mention of Beauman's fate Melissa sighed. "With how many vain fears," said she, "was I perplexed, lest, by some means he should discover my existence and place of residence, after he, alas, was silent in the tomb!"

Alonzo told Melissa that he had received a letter from Edgar, after he arrived in Holland, and that he had written him an answer, just as he left Paris, informing him of his reasons for returning to America.

When the time arrived that Alonzo and Melissa were to set out for Connecticut, Melissa's uncle and Alfred accompanied them as far as Georgetown,



where an affectionate parting took place: The latter returned to Charleston, and the former proceeded on their journey.

Philadelphia was now in possession of the British troops. Alonzo found Dr. Franklin's agent at Chester, transacted his business, went on, arrived at Vincent's where he left Melissa, and proceeded immediately to his father's.

The friends of Alonzo and Melissa were joyfully surprised at their arrival. Melissa's mother was sent for to Vincent's. Let imagination paint the meeting! As yet however they were not prepared to undeceive her father.

Alonzo found his parents in penurious circumstances; indeed, his father having the preceding summer, been too indisposed to manage his little farm with attention, and being unable to hire laborers, his crops had yielded but a scanty supply, and he had been compelled to sell most of his stock to answer pressing demands. With great joy they welcomed Alonzo, whom they had given up as lost. "You still find your father poor, Alonzo," said the old gentleman, "but you find him still honest.—From my inability to labor, we have latterly been a little more pressed than usual; but having now recovered my health, I trust that that difficulty will soon be removed."

Alonzo asked his father if he ever knew Dr. Franklin.

"We were school-mates," he replied, "and were intimately acquainted after we became young men in business for ourselves. We have done each other favors; I once divided my money with Franklin on an urgent occasion to him; he afterwards repaid me with ample interest—he will never forget it."

Alonzo then related to his father all the incidents

of his travels, minutely particularizing the disinterested conduct of Franklin, and then presented his father with the reversion of his estate. The old man fell on his knees, and with tears streaming down his withered cheeks, offered devout thanks to the great Dispenser of all mercies.

Alonzo then visited Melissa's father, who received him with much complacency. "I have injured," said he, "my young friend, deeply injured you; but in doing this, I have inflicted a wound still deeper in my own bosom."

Alonzo desired him not to renew his sorrows. "What is past," said he, "is beyond recal; but a subject of some importance to me, is the object of my present visit.—True it is, that your daughter was the object of my earliest affection—an affection which my bosom must ever retain: but being separated by the will of Providence—for I view Providence as overruling all events for wise purposes—I betook myself to travel. Time, you know it is said, sir, will blunt the sharpest thorns of sorrow.—[The old man sighed.]—In my travels I have found a lady so nearly resembling your daughter, that I was induced to sue for her hand, and have been so happy as to gain the promise of it. The favor I have to ask of you, sir, is only that you will permit the marriage ceremony to be celebrated in your house, as you know my father is poor, his house small and inconvenient, and that you will also honor me by giving the lady away. In receiving her from your hands, I shall in some measure realize former anticipations; I shall receive her in the character of Melissa."

"Ah!" said Melissa's father, "were it in my power—could I give you the original; But how vain that wish! Yes my young friend, your request shall be

punctually complied with: I will take upon myself the preparations. Name your day, and if the lady is portionless, in that she shall be to me a Melissa."

Alonzo bowed his head in gratitude; and after appointing that day week, he departed.

Invitations were once more sent abroad for the wedding of Alonzo and Melissa.—Few indeed knew it to be the real Melissa, but they were generally informed of Alonzo's reason, for preferring the celebration at her father's.

The evening before the day on which the marriage was to take place, Alonzo and Melissa were sitting with the Vincents in an upper room, when a person rapped at the door below. Vincent went down, and immediately returned, introducing, to the joy and surprise of the company, Edgar!

Here, again, we shall leave it for the imagination to depict the scene of an affectionate brother, meeting a tender and only sister, whom he had long since supposed to be dead! He had been at his father's, and his mother had let him into the secret, when he immediately hastened to Vincent's. He told them that he did not stay long in Holland; that after receiving Alonzo's letter from Paris, he felt an unconquerable propensity to return, and soon sailed for America, arrived a Boston, came to New Haven, took orders in the ministry, and had reached home that day: He informed them that Mr. Simpson and family had arrived at his father's and some relatives whom his mother had invited.

The next morning ushered in the day in which the hero and heroine of our story were to consummate their felicity. No cross purposes stood ready to intervene their happiness, no obdurate father, no watchful scowling aunt, to interrupt their transports. It was the latter end of May; nature was arrayed in

her richest ornaments, and adorned with her sweetest perfumes. The sun blended its mild lustre with the landscape's lovely green; silk-winged breezes frolicked amidst the flowers; the spring birds caroled in varying strains:

‘The air was fragrance, and the world was love.’

Evening was appointed for the ceremony, and Edgar was to be the officiating clergyman,

“To tie those bands which nought but death can sever.”

When the hour arrived, they repaired to the house of Melissa's father, where numerous guests had assembled. Melissa was introduced into the bridal apartment, and took her seat among a brilliant circle of ladies. She was attired in robes “white as the southern clouds,” spangled with silver, and trimmed with deep gold lace; her hair hung loosely upon her shoulders, encircled by a wreath of artificial flowers. She had regained all her former loveliness; the rose and the lily again blended their tinges in her cheek; again pensive sprightliness sparkled in her eye.

Alonzo was now introduced, and took his seat at the side of Melissa. His father and mother came next, who were placed at the right hand of the young couple: Melissa's parents followed, and were stationed at the left. Edgar then came and took his seat in front; after which the guests were summoned who filled the room. Edgar then rising, mentioned to the intended bride and bridegroom to rise also. He next turned to Alonzo's father for his sanction, who bowed assent. Then addressing his own father, with emotions that scarcely suffered him to articulate. “Do you, sir,” said he, “give this lady to that gentleman.” A solemn silence prevailed in the

room. Melissa was extremely agitated, as her father slowly rising, and with down-cast eyes,

“Where tides of heavy sorrow swell’d,”

took her trembling hand, and conveying it into Alonzo’s, “May the smiles of heaven rest upon you, he said; may future blessings crown your present happy prospects; and may your latter days never be embittered by the premature loss of near and dear \_\_\_\_\_,”

Pungent grief here choaked his utterance, and at this moment Melissa, falling upon her knees, “Dear father! she exclaimed, bursting into tears, pardon deception, acknowledge your daughter—your own Melissa!”

Her father started—he gazed at her with scrutinizing attention, and sunk back in his chair.—“My daughter!” he cried, “God of mysterious mercy! it is my daughter!”

The guests caught the contagious sympathy; convulsive sobs arose from all parts of the room. Melissa’s father clasped her in his arms—“And I receive thee as from the dead!” he said. “I am anxious to hear the mighty mystery unfolded. But first let the solemn rites for which we are assembled be concluded; let not an old man’s anxiety interrupt the ceremony.”

“But you are apprised, sir,” said Alonzo, “of my inability to support your daughter according to her deserts.”

“Leave that to me my young friend,” replied her father. “I have enough: my children are restored and I am happy.”

Melissa soon resumed her former station. The indissoluble knot was tied: they sat down to the

wedding feast, and mirth and hilarity danced in cheerful circles.

Before the company retired, Edgar related the most prominent incidents of Alonzo and Melissa's history, since they had been absent. The guests listened with attention, they applauded the conduct of our new bride and bridegroom, in which Melissa's father cordially joined. They rejoiced to find that Alonzo's father had regained his fortune, and copious libations were poured forth in honor of the immortal Franklin.

And now, reader of sensibility, indulge the pleasing sensations of thy bosom, for Alonzo and Melissa are MARRIED.

Alonzo's father was soon in complete repossession of his former property. The premises from which he had been driven by his unfeeling creditors, were yielded up without difficulty, and to which he immediately removed. He not only recovered the principal of the fortune he had lost, but the damages and the interest; so that, although like Job, he had seen afflictions, like him his latter days were better than his beginning. But wearied with the business of life, he did not again enter into the mercantile business, but placing his money at interest in safe hands, lived retired on his little farm.

A few days after the wedding as Melissa was sitting with Alonzo, Edgar and her parents, she asked her father whether the old mansion was inhabited.

"Not by human beings," he replied!—"Since it has fallen into my hands I have leased it to three of four different families, who all left it under foolish pretence or impression of hearing noises and seeing frightful objects, and such is the superstition of the people that no one now, will venture to try it

again, though I suppose its inhabitants to consist only of rats and mice."

Melissa then informed them of all that had happened when she was there, the alarming noises and horrible appearances she had been witness to, and in which she was confident her senses had not deceived her. Exceedingly astonished at her relation, it was agreed that Edgar and Alonzo, properly attended, should proceed to the mansion, in order to find whether any discoveries could be made which might tend to the elucidation of so mysterious an affair.

For this purpose they chose twenty men armed them with muskets and swords, and proceeded to the place, where they arrived in the dusk of the evening, having chosen that season as the most favorable to their designs.

They found the draw-bridge up, and the gate locked, as Edgar's father said he had left them. They entered and secured them in the same manner. When they came to the house, they cautiously unlocked the door, and proceeded to the chamber where they struck a fire and lighted candles, which they brought with them. It was then agreed to plant fifteen of the men at suitable distances around the mansion, and retain five in the chamber with Alonzo and Edgar.

The men who were placed around the house, were stationed behind trees, stumps or rocks, and where no object presented, lay flat on the ground, with orders not to stir, or discover themselves, let what would ensue, unless some alarm should be given from the house.

Alonzo and Edgar were armed with pistols and side arms, and posted themselves with the five men in the chamber, taking care that the lights should



not shine against the window shutters, so that nothing could be discovered from without. Things thus arranged, they observed almost implicit silence, no one being allowed to speak, except in a low whisper.

For a long time no sound was heard except the hollow roar of the winds in the neighboring forest, their whistling around the angles of the mansion, or the hoarse murmurs of the distant surge. The night was dark, and only illuminated by the feeble twinkling of half clouded stars.

They had watched until about midnight, when they were alarmed by noises in the rooms below, among which they could distinguish footsteps and human voices. Alonzo and Edgar, then taking each a pistol in one hand, and a drawn sword in the other, ordered their men to follow them, prepared for action. Coming to the head of the stairs, they saw a brilliant light streaming into the hall; they therefore concluded to take no candles, and to prevent discovery they took off their shoes. When they came into the hall opposite the door of the room from whence the light and noises proceeded, they discovered ten men genteelly dressed, sitting around a table, on which was placed a considerable quantity of gold and silver coin, a number of glasses and several decanters of wine. Alonzo and his party stood a few minutes, listening to the following discourse, which took place among this ghostly gentry.

"Well, boys, we have made a fine haul this trip."

———"Yes, but poor Bob, though, was plumped over by the d——d skulkers!"—"Aye, and had we not tugged bravely at the oars, they would have hooked us."———"Rascally cow-boys detained us too long."———"Well, never mind it; let us knock around the wine, and then divide the spoil."

At this moment, Alonzo and Edgar, followed by the five men, rushed into the room, crying, "*Surrender, or you are all dead men!*" In an instant the room was involved in pitchy darkness; a loud crash was heard, then a scampering about the floor, and a noise as if several doors shut too with violence. They however gave the alarm to the men without by loudly shouting "*Look out;*" and immediately the discharge of several guns was heard around the mansion. One of the men flew up stairs and brought a light; but, to their utter amazement no person was to be discovered in the room except their own party. The table with its apparatus, and the chairs on which these now invisible beings had sat, had disappeared, not a single trace of them being left.

While they stood petrified with astonishment, the men from without called for admittance. The door being unlocked, they led in a stranger wounded, whom they immediately discovered to be one of those they had seen at the table.

The men who had been stationed around the mansion informed, that some time before the alarm was made, they saw a number of persons crossing the yard from the western part of the enclosure, towards the house; that immediately after the shout was given, they discovered several people running back in the same direction: they hailed them, which being disregarded, they fired upon them, one of whom they brought down which was the wounded man they had brought in. The others, though they pursued them, got off.

The prisoner's wound was not dangerous; the ball had shattered his arm, and glanced upon his breast. They dressed his wound as well as they could, and then requested him to unfold the circumstances or the suspicious appearance in which he was involved.

"First promise me, on your honor," said the stranger, "that you will use your influence to prevent my being punished or imprisoned.

This they readily agreed to, on condition that he would conceal nothing from them—and he gave them the following relation:

That they were a part of a gang of illicit traders; men who had combined for the purpose of carrying on a secret and illegal commerce with the British army on Long Island, whom, contrary to the existing laws, they supplied with provisions, and brought off English goods, which they sold at very extortionate prices. But this was not all; they also brought over large quantities of counterfeit continental money, which they put off among the Americans for live stock, poultry, produce, &c. which they carried to the Island. The counterfeit money they purchased by merely paying for the printing; the British having obtained copies of the American emission, struck immense quantities of it in New-York, and insidiously sent it out into the country, in order to sink our currency.

This gang was likewise connected with the cow boys, who made it their business to steal, not only milch cows, and other cattle, but also hogs and sheep, which they drove by night to some convenient place on the shores of the Sound, where these *thief-partners* received them and conveyed them to the British.

"In our excursions across the Sound, continued the wounded man, we had frequently observed this mansion, which, from every appearance, we were convinced was uninhabited—we therefore selected it as a suitable place for our future rendezvous, which had heretofore been only in the open woods. To cross the moat we dragged up an old canoe from

the sea shore, which we concealed in the bushes as soon as we recessed from the old mansion. To get over the wall we used ladders of ropes, placing a flat of thick board on the top of the spikes driven into the wall. We found more difficulty in getting into the house:—we however at length succeeded, by tearing away a part of the back wall, where we fitted in a door so exactly, and so nicely painted it, that it could not be distinguished from the wall itself. This door was so constructed, that on touching a spring, it would fly open, and when unrestrained, would shut too with violence. Finding the apartment so eligible for our purpose, and fearing that at some future time we might be disturbed either by the owner of the building or some tenant, we cut similar doors into every room of the house, so that on an emergency we could traverse every apartment without access to the known doors. Trap-doors on a similar construction, communicated with the cellar:—the table, which you saw us sitting around, stood on one of those, which, on your abrupt appearance, as soon as the candles were extinguished, was with its contents, precipitated below, and we made our escape by those secret doors, judging, that although you had seen us, if we could get off, you would be unable to find out any thing which might lead to our discovery.

“ A circumstance soon occurred, which tended to embarrass our plans, and at first seemed to menace their overthrow. Our assembling at the mansion was irregular, as occasion and circumstances required; often not more than once a week, but sometimes more frequent, and always in the night.—Late one night, as we were proceeding to the mansion, and had arrived near it suddenly one of the chamber windows was opened, and a light issued from within,

We entered the house with caution, and soon discovered that some person was in the chamber from whence we had seen the light. We remained until all was silent, and then entered the chamber by one of our secret doors, and to our inexpressable surprise, beheld a beautiful young lady asleep on the only bed in the room. We cautiously retired, and reconnoitering all parts of the mansion, found that she was the only inhabitant except ourselves. The singularity of her being there alone, is a circumstance we have never been able to discover, but it gave us fair hopes of easily procuring her ejection. We then immediately withdrew, and made preparations to dispossess the fair tenant of the premises to which we considered ourselves more properly entitled, as possessing a prior incumbency.

“We did not effect the completion of our apparatus under three or four days. As soon as they were prepared, we returned to the mansion. As we approached the house, it appears the lady heard us, for again she suddenly flung up a window and held out a candle: we skulked from the light, but feared she had a glimpse of us.—After we had got into the house we were still until we supposed her to be asleep, which we found to be the case on going to her chamber.

“We then stationed one near her bed, who, by a loud rap on the floor with a cane, appeared to arouse her in a fright. Loud noises were then made below, and some of them ran heavily up the stairs which led to her chamber; the person stationed in the room whispering near her bed—she raised herself up, and he fled behind the curtains. Soon after she again lay down; he approached nearer the bed with a design to lay his hand, on which he had drawn a thin sheet-lead glove, across her face; but discovering

her arm on the outside of the bed-clothes, he grasped it—she screamed and sprang up in the bed; the man then left the room.

“As it was not our intention to injure the lady but only to drive her from the house, we concluded we had sufficiently alarmed her, and having extinguished the lights, were about to depart, when we heard her descending the stairs. She came down and examined the doors, when one of our party, in a loud whisper, crying “*away away*,” she darted up stairs, and we left the house.

“We did not return the next night, in order to give her time to get off; but the night after we again repaired to the mansion, expecting that she had gone, but we were disappointed. As it was late when we arrived, she was wrapped in sleep, and we found that more forcible measures must be resorted to before we could remove her, and for such measures we were amply prepared.

The stranger then unfolded the mysteries of that awful night, when Melissa was so terrified by horrible appearances. One of the tallest and most robust of the gang, was attired, as has been described, when he appeared by her bed side. The white robe was an old sheet, stained in some parts with a liquid red mixture; the wound in his breast was artificial, and the blood issuing therefrom was only some of this mixture, pressed from a small bladder, concealed under his robe. On his head and face he wore a mask, with glass eyes—the mask was painted to suit their purposes. The bloody dagger was of wood, and painted.

Thus accoutred, he took his stand near Melissa’s bed, having first blown out the candles she had left burning, and discharged a small pistol. Perceiving this had awakened her, a train of powder was fired

in the adjoining room opposite the secret door, which was left open, in order that the flash might illuminate her apartment; then several large cannon balls were rolled through the rooms over her head, imitative of thunder. The person in her room then uttered a horrible groan, and gliding along by her bed, took his stand behind the curtains, near the foot. The noises below, the cry of murder, the firing of the second pistol, and the running up stairs, were all corresponding scenes to impress terror on her imagination. The pretended ghost then advanced in front of her bed, while lights were slowly introduced, which first shone faintly until they were ushered into the room by the private door, exhibited the person before her in all his horrific appearances. On her shrieking, and shrinking into the bed, the lights were suddenly extinguished, and the person, after commanding her to be gone in a hoarse voice, passed again to the foot of the bed, shook it violently, and made a seeming attempt to get upon it, when, perceiving her to be springing up, he fled out of the room by the secret door, cautiously shut it, and joined his companions.

The operators had not yet completed their farce, or rather, to Melissa, tragedy. They had framed an image of paste-board, in human shape, arrayed it in black, its eyes being formed of large pieces of what is vulgarly called *fox-fire*,\* made into the likeness of human eyes, some material being placed in its mouth, around which was a piece of the thinnest scarlet tiffany, in order to make it appear of a flame color. They had also constructed a large combusti-

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\* A sort of decayed or rotten wood, which in the night looks like coals of fire, of a bright whitish color. It emits a faint light.



blo ball, of several thicknesses of paste-board, to which a match was placed. The image was to be conveyed into her room, and placed, in the dark, before her bed;—while in that position, the ball was to be rubbed over with phosphorus, the match set on fire, and rolled across her chamber, and when it burst, the image was to vanish by being suddenly conveyed out of the private door, which was to close the scene for that night. But as Melissa had now arisen and lighted candles the plan was defeated.

While they were consulting how to proceed, they heard her unlock her chamber door, and slowly descend the stairs. Fearing a discovery, they retired with their lights, and the person who had been in her chamber, not having stripped off his ghostly habiliments; laid himself down on one side of the hall. The man who had the image, crowded himself with it under the stairs she was descending. On her dropping the candle, when she turned to flee to her chamber from the sight of the same object which had appeared at her bed-side, the person under the stairs presented the image at their foot, and at the same instant the combustible ball was prepared, and rolled through the hall; and when on its bursting she fainted, they began to grow alarmed; but on finding that she recovered and regained her chamber, they departed, for that time, from the house.

“Our scheme,” continued the wounded man, “had the desired effect. On returning a few evenings after, we found the lady gone and the furniture removed. Several attempts were afterwards made to occupy the house, but we always succeeded in soon frightening the inhabitants away.

Edgar and Alonzo then requested their prisoner to show them the springs of the secret doors, and how they were opened. The springs were sunk in the

wood, which being touched by entering a gimlet hole with a piece of pointed steel, which each of the gang always had about him, the door would fly open, and fasten again in shutting too. On opening the trap-door over which the gang had sat when they first discovered them, they found the table and chairs, with the decanters broken, and the money, which they secured. In one part of the cellar they were shown a kind of cave, its mouth covered with boards and earth—here the company kept their furniture, and to this place would they have removed it, had they not been so suddenly frightened away. The canoe they found secreted in the bushes beyond the canal.

It was then agreed that the man should go before the proper authorities in a neighboring town, and there, as state's evidence, make affidavit of what he had recited, and as complete a developement of the characters concerned in the business as possible, when he was to be released. The man inquired to what town they were to go, which, when they had informed him, "Then," said he, "it will be in my power to perform one deed of justice before I leave the country, as leave it I must, immediately after I have given in my testimony, or I shall be assassinated by some of those who will be implicated in the transaction I have related."

He then informed them, that while he, with the gang was prosecuting the illicit trade, a British ship came and anchored in the Sound, which they supplied with provisions, but that having at one time a considerable quantity on hand, the ship sent its boat on shore, with an officer and five men, to fetch it: the officer came with them on shore, leaving the men in the boat. "As we were about to carry the provisions on board the boat," continued the man,

\* a party of Americans fired upon us, and wounded the officer in the thigh, who fell: "I shall be made prisoner," said he, taking out his purse; keep this, and if I live and regain my liberty, perhaps you may have an opportunity of restoring it:—alarm the boat's crew, and shift for yourselves." The boat was alarmed, returned to the ship, and we saved ourselves by flight.

"This happened about four months ago: the ship soon after sailed for New York, and the officer was imprisoned in the gaol of the town to which we are to go; I can therefore restore him his purse."

The man farther informed them, that they had several times come near being taken, and the last trip they were fired upon, and one of their party killed

"They immediately set out for the aforesaid town, after having dismissed their fifteen men; and when they arrived there, Alonzo and Edgar accompanied their prisoner to the gaol. On making the proper inquiries, they were conducted into a dark and dirty apartment of the gaol, where were several prisoners in irons. The British officer was soon distinguished among them by his regimentals. Though enveloped in filth and dust, his countenance appeared familiar to Alonzo; and on a few moments recollection, he recognized in the manacled officer, the generous midshipman, Jack Brown, who had so disinterestedly relieved him, when he escaped from the prison in London'

In the fervency of his feelings, Alonzo flew to him and clasped him in his arms. "What do I behold!" he cried. "My friend, my brave deliverer, in chains, in my own country!"

"The fortune of war, boy!" said Jack—it might have been worse. But my lad, I am heartily glad

to see you; how has it fared with you since you left Old England?"——"We will talk of that by and by," said Alonzo.

There were then some American officers of distinction in town, with whom Edgar was acquainted, to whom he applied for the relief of the noble sailor:——and as there were several other British prisoners in gaol, it was agreed that a cartel should be immediately sent to New York to exchange them. Alonzo had therefore, the satisfaction to see the irons knocked off of his liberal hearted benefactor, and his prison doors opened.

The man they had taken at the mansion, returned him his purse containing only twenty-five guineas of which Jack gave him ten. "There, boy," said he, "you have been honest, so I will divide with you."

They then repaired to an inn, Jack whose wound was healed, was put under the hands of a barber, cleansed, furnished with a change of clothes, and soon appeared in a new attitude.

He informed Alonzo, that soon after he left England, his ship was ordered to America: that the price of provisions growing high, it had taken almost all his wages to support his family; that he had sent home his last remittance just before he was taken, reserving only the twentyfive guineas which had been restored him that day.——"But I have never despaired," said he: "the great Commodore of life orders all for the best.—My tour of duty is to serve my king and country, and provide for my dear Poll and her chicks, which, if I faithfully perform, I shall gain the applause of the Commander."

When the cartel was ready to depart, Alonzo taking Jack apart from the company presented him with draft for five-hundred pounds sterling, on a merchant in New-York, who privately transacted

business with the Americans. "Take this, my friend," said he; "you can ensure it by converting it into bills of exchange on London. Though you once saw me naked, I can now conveniently spare this sum, and it may assist you in buffeting the billows of life." The generous tar shed tears of gratitude, and Alonzo enjoyed the pleasure of seeing him depart, calling down blessings on the head of his reciprocal benefactor.

The man who came with Alonzo and Edgar from the mansion, then went before the magistrate of the town, and gave his testimony and affidavit, by which it appeared that several eminent characters of Connecticut were concerned in this illicit trade.—They then released him, gave him the money they had found in the cellar at the mansion, and he immediately left the town.—Precepts were soon after issued for a number of those traders: several were taken, among whom were some of the gang, and others who were only concerned—but most of them absconded, so that the company and their plans were broken up.

When Alonzo and Edgar returned home and related their adventure, they were all surprised at the fortitude of Melissa in being enabled to support her spirits in a solitary mansion, amidst such great and so many terrors.

It was now that Alonzo turned his attention to future prospects. It was time to select a place for domestic residence. He consulted Melissa and she expressively mentioned the little secluded village, where

"Ere fate and fortune flown'd severe,"

they projected scenes of connubial bliss, and planned the structure of their family edifice. This inta-

mation accorded with the ardent wishes of Alonzo. The site formerly marked out, with an adjoining farm, was immediately purchased, and suitable buildings erected to which Alonzo and Melissa removed the ensuing summer.

The clergyman of the village having recently died in a good old age, Edgar was called to the pastoral charge of this unsophisticated people. Here did Melissa and Alonzo repose after the storms of adversity were past. Here did they realize all the happiness which the sublunary hand of time apportioned to mortals. Their varying seasons diversified their joys, except when Alonzo was called with the militia of his country, wherein he bore an eminent commission, to oppose the enemy; and this was not unfrequent, as in his country's defence he took a very conspicuous part. Then would anxiety, incertitude, and disconsolation possess the bosom of Melissa, until dissipated by his safe return. But the happy termination of the war soon removed all cause of these inquietudes.

Soon after the close of the war, Alonzo received a letter from his friend, Jack Brown, dated at an interior parish in England,—in which, after pouring forth abundance of gratitude, he informed, that on returning to England he procured his discharge from the navy, sold his house, and removed into the country, where he had set up an inn with the sign of *The Grateful American*. “You have made us all happy,” said he; “my dear Poll blubbered like a fresh water sailor in a hurricane, when I told her of your goodness. My wife, my children, all hands upon deck are yours. We have a good run of business, and are now under full sail for the land of prosperity.”

Edgar married to one of the Miss Simpsons, whose

father's seat was in the vicinity of the village. The parents of Alonzo and Melissa were their frequent visitors, as were also Vincent and his lady, with many others of their acquaintance, who all rejoiced in their happy situation, after such a diversity of troubles. Alfred was generally once a year their guest, until at length he married and settled in the mercantile business in Charleston, South Carolina.

To our hero and heroine, the rural charms of their secluded village were a source of ever pleasing variety. Spring, with its verdured fields, flowery meads, and vocal groves, its vernal gales, purling rills, and its evening whippoorwill; summer, with its embowering shades, reflected in the glassy lake, and the long, pensive, yet sprightly notes of the solitary strawberry-bird;\* its lightning and its thunder: autumn, with its mellow fruit, its yellow foliage and decaying verdure;—winter, with its hoarse, rough blasts, its icy beard and snowy mantle, all tended to thrill, with sensations of pleasing transition, the feeling bosoms of ALONZO AND MELISSA.

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\*A bird which, in the New-England States, makes its first appearance about the time strawberries begin to ripen. Its song is lengthy and consists of a variety of notes, commencing sprightly, but ending plaintively and melancholy.











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